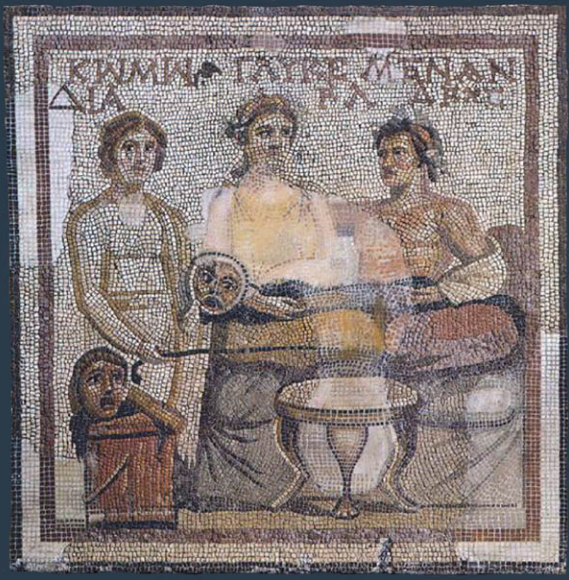
The Lives of the Greek Poets

SECOND EDITION



MARY R. LEFKOWITZ

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Second Edition

MARY R. LEFKOWITZ

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For Hugh Lloyd-Jones
In Memoriam

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Preface

This is a short book about a topic that has been considered to be peripheral to mainstream classical studies, the ancient biographies of the Greek poets. In the first edition of this book (1981), I argued that these biographies preserved only a relatively small amount of historical information and that therefore students of the ancient world should not try to use the biographies as a guide to the interpretation of ancient poetry, even though that had been the standard practice up to that time. I suggested that much of the material in all of the lives was a kind of fiction and that if any factual information survived it was usually because the poet himself provided it for a different purpose than that intended by his or her biographers. I argued that even plausible-sounding material should be regarded with suspicion. In particular I wanted to interrogate certain commonly held assumptions, for example, that Sophocles was more pious than Euripides, whose dramas appeared to his biographers to question the existence of the gods, and that the poet Callimachus specifically disapproved of the work of his younger contemporary Apollonius of Rhodes. Instead, I sought to show (and still believe) that literary analysis of these works ought to be based not on the poets' biographies but on the poems themselves. Since the appearance of the first edition of this book, even scholars who do not agree with everything that I have said have nonetheless tended not to use the ancient biographies as a guide to understanding ancient poetry.

I wrote the original version of this book because, in the course of my work on the fifth-century B.C. poet Pindar (collected in Lefkowitz 1991), I had discovered that much of what the ancient commentators said about the historical setting and performance of his poetry did not derive from independent sources but rather had been deduced by inference from the text of his poems. When the "I" in Pindar's odes insists on his superiority to others, the commentators did not observe that archaic poets regularly made such claims, to establish their authority. Rather, these commentators supposed that hostile

environments had elicited the poet's assertions and complaints. These views, although founded on conjecture, made Pindar's text unnecessarily difficult to understand. I also found little in the way of historical information about the poet in the *Vitae* that accompanied the manuscripts of his poetry. Sections of these biographies appeared to be based on his hymns, with anecdotes about his connection to the gods. Was it possible that we had no independent biographical information in the case of other poets as well? Janet Fairweather, in a pioneering article (1974), had called attention to the unreliability of many so-called facts in the biographical tradition. But no one had yet tried to look at the subgenre of biographies of poets. My hypothesis was that the lives of poets might be different from those of philosophers or historians, because of the nature of their writings. I began by looking at the manuscript *Vita* of Euripides (Lefkowitz 1979) and then considered the literary tradition about the quarrel between Callimachus and Apollonius (Lefkowitz 1980).

This second edition of *Lives of the Greek Poets* offers a wider perspective on literary biography than the original version did, and it aims to provide a more sympathetic portrait of the writers who tried to create biographies for the poets whose works they admired and sought to interpret for posterity. Here I have followed the lead of Barbara Graziosi (2002) and taken such advantage as I could of other recent studies in ancient reception. Whenever possible I have tried to say something about the work of individual biographers and to give some indication of how biographical traditions developed over time. As in the first edition I have concentrated on the anecdotes and narrative structure of the biographies and have not attempted to investigate how ancient biographers determined the poets' dates or constructed catalogues of their works or discoveries.

Also in this second edition I have updated citations of ancient sources to take account of the many invaluable works of reference that have been published in the past thirty years and have included references to scholarly literature published during that time, though I regret that I was unable to consult Hanink 2010 and Knöbl 2010 in time to meet this book's production schedule. Not least, I have corrected mistakes and inadvertent omissions, taking advantage of criticism and suggestions by the reviewers of the first edition, especially Bell 1983, Fairweather 1982 and 1983, and Griffin 1982. I have tried both to learn from and to respond to criticism by Cameron 1995, Graziosi 2002, Scullion 2003, Irwin 2006, and Kivilo 2010. I have also attempted to make this version of the book more user-friendly, keeping in mind that much of the material that I discuss is unfamiliar even to professional classicists.

Although I hope that this book will continue to be useful for professional scholars, I have tried to keep it accessible to readers who do not know ancient Greek. I have translated and transliterated all Greek words and phrases. Also for the convenience of readers I have provided my own translations of some of the longer and more influential biographies, in the appendixes. Following the practice of the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, I have used throughout the Latinized versions of Greek names, on the grounds that they will be more familiar to most readers.

While I was working on the first edition of this book I received consistent encouragement from Arnaldo Momigliano and Sir Ronald Syme. Colin Macleod urged me to write the first edition of this book and made suggestions and improvements throughout. I had the generous support of Wellesley College, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and St. Hilda's College, Oxford.

In preparing the second edition I owe thanks to Richard Fletcher and Johanna Hanink for inviting me to participate in the Laurence Seminar at the University of Cambridge in 2010, to Ranja Knöbl for her helpful suggestions, and to Timothy Duff for his advice about my work on the life of Euripides. Once again I am grateful to Wellesley College for supporting my research and to Daphne François for her dedicated assistance with it. The illustration on the dust jacket depicting Menander, Glycera, and the goddess Comedy (Princeton 40.435) was reproduced with the kind permission of the Princeton Art Museum.

I cannot adequately acknowledge here my debt to my husband, Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones, for his continued interest in this project, suggestions, and criticism. This book is dedicated to his memory.

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Abbreviations

In general I have followed the conventions of spelling and abbreviation of ancient names used in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (third edition). References to ancient texts and to editors not listed in the *OCD* are abbreviated as follows:

Cert.	*Certamen* (*Contest between Homer and Hesiod*)
CW	*Classical World*
Dr	*Scholia Vetera in Pindari Carmina* (Drachmann 1964)
EG	*Epigrammata Graeca* (Page 1975)
FGE	*Further Greek Epigrams* (Page 1981)
GP	*The Garland of Philip* (Gow and Page 1968)
GPr	*Poetarum Elegiacorum Testimonia et Fragmenta* (Gentili and Prato 1979)
HE	*Hellenistic Epigrams* (Gow and Page 1965)
K–Th	*Menandri quae supersunt* (Koerte and Thierfelder 1952)
PMG	*Poetae Melici Graeci* (Page 1962)
PMGF	*Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (Davies 1991)
PW	*The Delphic Oracle* (Parke and Wormell 1956)
QUCC	*Quaderni urbinati di cultura classica*
V	*Sappho und Alcaeus* (Voigt 1971)
W	*Iambi et Elegi Graeci* (West 1989)

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The Lives of the Greek Poets

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Introduction

What do we know about the actual lives of the ancient Greek poets, whose works we still read and whose ideas have had a lasting influence on all Western literature? Not much, compared with what we know about most modern writers. The biographers of Greek poets did not have at their disposal the kinds of historical materials that modern biographers can now resort to: diaries, letters, newspapers, historical records, registers of births and deaths. They had no firsthand information about what the poets read and studied, who taught them to compose verse, exactly who their family members were and what they were like, or where the poets traveled, when and where they were born and died or what caused their deaths, or when and by what means the poets' works were published.

Records were not kept, for technological reasons. Permanent storage materials, such as papyrus, were expensive and thus available only to the wealthy. It was by no means easy to write about topics that required research. Literary and historical works were handwritten on book rolls that were difficult both to read and to manipulate, even using both hands. It was never easy, and sometimes impossible, to check a reference. The poets' contemporaries did not record detailed biographical information, in part because they already knew it and in part because they thought that such factual details were worth recording only if they played some role in a life and death enterprise, such as a trial or a war. Historians like Herodotus or Thucydides provided brief biographies of kings and generals.[1] Alexander could command the services of a Callisthenes, but no ancient poet seems to have had a Boswell.

In the absence of specific personal data, the biographers of ancient poets turned to the only sources that were available to them, literature by and about the poets whose lives they were seeking to write. Such "recovery" of biographical information required imagination. Biographers hunted down whatever could be thought to be a personal expression on the part of the poet, such as a general reflection by the chorus of a drama, or even a character, particularly if it was expressed as a first-person statement. Biographers scrutinized the poets' own claims of superiority over ordinary people and deduced from these claims that poets were heroic figures whose lives involved confrontations with and isolation from fellow citizens, and who for that reason often died violent or extraordinary deaths. These biographies were representational or illustrative rather than historical, in our sense of the word. Biographers could not tell their readers who Homer really was, but they could offer a portrait of the kind of person who might have written the *Odyssey*—a man who had both suffered and traveled extensively. Even though they did not have any information about Euripides' daily life, they could attempt to reconstruct the kind of personality who might have written dramas as disturbing and innovative as the *Hippolytus* or the *Bacchae*.

For us, the failure of ancient biographers to provide detailed historical data might seem to be a deprivation. Not that historical information would necessarily help us better to understand why Sophocles was a great dramatist or to discover how someone known as Homer, or "Hostage," made use of traditional techniques to produce works as great as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. But at least historical biography would enable us to describe with greater precision than we can at present the settings in which Homer's poems were recited, or allow us to provide a more accurate portrait of the political impact of ancient Athenian drama. As it is, we are hardly in a better position to do so than the dramatists' ancient biographers, since our primary evidence comes from the dramas themselves, from caricatures of dramatists by contemporary comic poets, and from the biographies of the poets that were derived from those same sources.

But even though ancient biographies of poets are not what we might choose them to be, they still merit close consideration. They can provide clues to what ancient writers and audiences supposed the creative process to be, and can give us an impression of the kinds of poetry and subject matter that ancient people admired at different times and places. Ancient biographies of poets, even when unhistorical, provide the earliest examples of a trend that has persisted in Western thought. In popular imagination, art is never separated from

the artist. In the Byzantine era, individual "Lives" of the poets were prefaced to the manuscripts of their works, as if to provide a guide for readers. Readers have always supposed that there must be a connection between a work of literature and the life of its creator.[2] Although theorists emphasize different aspects of the connection, the fact that there is a connection is never doubted.

No one knows exactly when the ancient Greeks began to take an active interest in the lives of their poets. Homer was the most widely read of all the poets, but the earliest evidence we have about his life dates to the early fifth century B.C., in a fragmentary text where the pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus relates a version of a strange tale that was later regarded as the standard story about Homer's death. The story may have been told in oral form for many years before Heraclitus committed it to writing, but we have no certain way of knowing when it was invented. It was not until the beginning of the fourth century B.C. that writers began to produce detailed narrative accounts of Homer's life. The case of Homer appears to be an example of Barthes' dictum that biography begins with the death of the poet.[3] Yet stories about Euripides circulated during his lifetime, if only because his great popularity attracted the close attention of Aristophanes and other comic poets.

Originally the biographies seem to have taken the form of narrative histories or of dialogues. Unfortunately, only a few excerpts and fragments of these have come down to us. For the most part, all that survives are summaries or encyclopedia entries based on the biographies that were collated by writers in the Roman and Byzantine empires, long after the times that they were seeking to describe. But even in the shorter entries we can see that most biographers regarded certain kinds of information as essential. Virtually every biographer includes the poet's dates, parents, homeland, early influences and teachers, some information about the poet's works, and the place and nature of the poet's death. Themes like isolation and exile occur in some narratives, but not with sufficient regularity to indicate that poets were always regarded as scapegoats or as particular "victims of the Muses."[4] Occasional elements of folktale can be found in some Lives, particularly in the accounts of poets' deaths.[5]

But even those biographers who wrote accounts of the lives of more than one poet do not appear to have adhered to any rigidly fixed narrative template. If there is a mythical pattern behind some biographical narratives, it is that of the hero, who, despite his great deeds, often dies in disgrace or exile. Even in the process of memorializing their extraordinary achievements, biographers do not fail to point out the poets' weaknesses of character and professional failings.

Biographical myths, like heroic myths, were created for both aetiological and ethical purposes. They made use of local stories and geography but at the same time sought to convey the messages about human life inherent in ancient Greek religion, which warned of the inevitable failure that followed even the most significant accomplishments. The process of creating narratives, although eclectic, was basically imitative, attaching local details to established patterns; for all we know, the heroic myths themselves might have been created in the much same ways. Although the biographers wrote in a simple and direct style with a verisimilitude characteristic of historical writing, beneath the surface of their narratives lie myths that retain vestiges of their original potency.

Since one distinguishing quality of ancient Greek mythology is its power to endure, biographers sought to incorporate mythical elements into their narratives, so that their work might have a lasting influence. In that aim they appear to have succeeded. Many modern critics still think of Homer more or less as Plato did, as a mimetic poet, whose words and thoughts are dictated by ancient tradition, rather than as a towering genius who transcended conventions and created epics that were not only longer but more enduring than anything created before or since. Many scholars still suppose that because Euripides was considered to be an atheist and a philosopher, his expressions of piety and patriotism were expressed ironically. I hope that this book will encourage classicists to reexamine those assumptions, along with other ideas about ancient literary history that derive from the biographies of poets.

In this book, I treat the biographical material for each poet separately, in roughly chronological order, calling attention to repeated themes but not trying to argue in favor of any overarching theory about how the various narratives were formed.[6] The advantage of concentrating on one poet at a time is that it helps to show why the character of individual poets' works have developed in distinctive ways, and why (for example) biographies sound proportionately more like caricatures whenever biographers had access to characterizations in comedy. But this approach also has an unfortunate disadvantage, which is that it encourages readers to consult just those sections of the book that are of immediate interest to themselves and not to read other sections that might give a fuller picture of the development of these biographies, such as the chapters on Homer, Pindar, or Euripides, where I have attempted to trace the different ways in which writers have constructed the poets' lives over the centuries, and sought to show how the narratives of their lives, at least to some extent, have been shaped by mythological patterns.

This book is meant to be suggestive, not comprehensive. I have not tried to discuss the biographies of every known ancient Greek poet but rather have concentrated on the better-known poets, especially those whose Lives best exemplify the process of creative development of biographical narrative. The purpose of the book is to illustrate how and why the biographers of poets wrote what they did, a kind of historical fiction that at its best appears to have been amusing and entertaining. Even in their most condensed, misleading, and incoherent versions, the ancient literary biographies still merit our attention, because in them we can see how myths were created and because they allow us to see that ancient poetry still managed to retain some semblance of its value long after it had originally been composed and all traces of the poets' physical existences had vanished.

CHAPTER ONE

Hesiod

Hesiod comes before Homer in this book, because classical authors usually speak of them in that order. Why Hesiod was given precedence is never explicitly stated.[1] It was not for metrical convenience, since either name could be fitted easily into a hexameter line. By contrast, scholars today give precedence to Homer, first because he seems to us to be the greater poet, and secondly because they believe that Homer composed his poetry orally while Hesiod did so with the aid of writing. We now think that Hesiod's *floruit* might have been ca. 700 B.C., if we assume that the "warlike Amphidamas" at whose funeral games he competed (*Op*. 654–57) was involved in the war that occurred around that time between Chalkis and Eretria.[2] But the date we now assign to Homer (ca. 725 B.C.) is also provisional, because it is based on the character of his poetry rather than on any secure external sources. Like ancient biographers of Hesiod and Homer, we still must rely primarily on what we can infer from their poetry.

In his poems, Hesiod tells us about his father, his brother, and his own credentials as a poet. The information emerges in context, not as autobiography (in the contemporary sense) but as documentation of the major themes of his poems.[3] The *Works and Days* is addressed to his brother Perses, whom he accuses of having cheated him of his property (37–41). Because of his behavior, Perses is the ideal person to whom to address an epic about the need for justice and hard work. Information about Hesiod and Perses' father is presented as an example of how men earn a living by merchant shipping: their father sailed to mainland Greece from Cyme in Aeolia and settled in Ascra on the

slopes of Mt. Helicon in Boeotia (633–40). Hesiod gives the story dramatic emphasis: his father did not flee "luxury, wealth, and happiness, but evil poverty, which Zeus gives to men." Ascra is "bad in winter, harsh in summer, no good at any time." His description of the climate sounds authentic but may be exaggerated: Plutarch says that Ascra gets winter winds and no summer breezes, but he thought that in his day (ca. A.D. 50–120) the town had a climate that was relatively pleasant for that part of the world (fr. 82 Sandbach).[4]

A few lines later (646–62) Hesiod tells us that he won a prize for his song at Chalkis in Euboea. Again he provides this information about himself to explain why he is able to give advice about seafaring and ships, even though (as he confesses) he has never made a voyage longer than the boat ride across the strait between Aulis and Chalkis, which at its narrowest point is only about two hundred feet wide (i.e., two *plethra*, Strabo, Geog. 9.2.2). Yet, even without practical experience, Hesiod says, he knows about ships because he is a poet, to whom "the Muses have taught a song inspired by the gods" (*athesphaton hymnon,* 662).[5] He explains that at Chalkis he won a prize at the "contests in honor of warlike Amphidamas, many contests planned and set up by his sons, where I boast that I won by my song and brought home a tripod with handles" (654–57).[6] Here he does not offer more information about himself, such as his parents' names, or how old he was when he won the contest, because that information is not relevant to his purpose, which is to explain to Perses (or the rest of his audience) why they ought to trust his advice.

Hesiod also describes his professional credentials at the beginning of the *Theogony* (22–34). Since his poem is about the gods, in this passage he describes how the Muses came to him and instructed him to write his song. The goddesses appeared while he was pasturing his sheep and spoke to him "first of all." They gave him a laurel branch and a "sacred voice" (*thespin audēn*, 31) to "sing what will be and what was before, and the race of the gods, and first and last of themselves" (33–34). They point out how their knowledge and power of speech set them apart from the "shepherds of the wilderness, evil disgraces, mere bellies" (26).[7] Their gift of laurel to Hesiod (30) marks him also as speaker and singer, distinct from the rest.[8] Unlike the other shepherds, who live in the wilderness and think only of eating, the poet will deal not with present concerns but with the future, the past, and the race of the gods. He lends excitement to his account by quoting the words the Muses spoke to him, but he does not provide any specific information about how old he was when they appeared or how he reacted to what they told him, because he does not wish to talk about himself so much as to establish his poetic authority. When

later poets wanted their readers to think about this passage, they recorded their own encounters with the Muses.[9]

Although biographers in the fifth and fourth centuries had only these first-person statements to go on, they found clues in Hesiod's poetry that helped them create more information. The fourth-century historian Ephorus of Cyme (Hesiod's father's hometown in Asia Minor) says that Hesiod's father's name was Dios, because he addresses Perses as "of illustrious family" (*dion genos, Op.* 299). Hesiod's mother's name is said to have been Pycimede ("close intelligence"), because Hesiod boasts in both poems of his vast knowledge.[10] The poet's concern with justice in the *Works and Days* may have inspired Ephorus' claim that Hesiod's father left Cyme "not for merchant trade but because he killed a kinsman" (*FGrHist* 70 F 100), like the refugee Theoclymenus in the *Odyssey* (15.272–76). Ephorus also provides a genealogy that gives Cyme as Homer's birthplace and makes Hesiod Homer's first cousin (*FGrHist* 70 F 1, cf. *Cert.* §4). Although Hesiod implies that he is a native of Ascra (*Op.* 633–40), later biographers say that Hesiod (like his cousin Homer) was born in Cyme and was brought to Ascra as a young man (*Suda*, Eta 583).

In the *Works and Days* Hesiod says nothing about the other competitors at the funeral games for Amphidamas. The idea that he might have been involved in a contest with another master poet may have been inspired by Hesiod himself; an epic was attributed to him about a contest between the prophets Calchas and Mopsus (*Melampodia* fr. 278, 279 M–W).[11] The notion that there was a contest specifically between Hesiod and Homer probably derives from the sophist Alcidamas (fl. ca. 400 B.C.). Alcidamas' *Mouseion* was consulted by the writer of the second-century A.D. treatise *On Homer and Hesiod, Their Origin and Their Contest* (*Cert.* §14).[12] In that treatise, the people who witness the contest ask that the prize be awarded to Homer, because he displays the greater technical skill in improvising verses in response to Hesiod's challenges; Alcidamas in particular approved of improvisation in oratory.[13] But the king gives the crown to Hesiod because his poetry concerns the works of peacetime (in contrast to the war and slaughter described in Homer's *Iliad*).[14]

Hesiod's death also was believed to have been divinely ordained, because it fulfilled the prediction of an oracle. Thucydides alludes to Hesiod's death while describing a military expedition in 426 B.C. in which the Athenian army camped in the sanctuary of Nemean Zeus, "where Hesiod, the poet, is said to have died at the hands of local people, after he had received an oracle (206 PW) that he would die in Nemea" (3.95–3.96.1).[15] The poet did not seek to avoid this sanctuary of Nemean Zeus at Oeneon in Ozolian Locris, because he

supposed that the oracle was referring to the better-known sanctuary of Zeus at Nemea in the Argolid. As Thucydides tells it, the story is a brief illustration of the difficulties involved in interpreting oracles correctly.[16] But in later accounts, as we can infer from other narratives of the deaths of poets, the story might have also demonstrated that Hesiod's death corresponded inversely to his achievements in life. Hesiod was taught by the Muses, but he dies of ignorance. According to the philosopher Heraclitus (ca. 500 B.C., 22 B 56 DK), Homer was "the wisest of all the Greeks," but he died because he could not answer a riddle. By meeting his death as a result of his own ignorance, the poet's previously exalted stature is brought down to that of an ordinary man, and all possibility of envy, human or divine, incurred in life by the poet as the result of his superior knowledge is mitigated.[17] The pattern is apparent also in the myths of the great warrior heroes; for example, the mighty Heracles is killed by the woman he chose as his wife (Bacchyl. 5.165–75).

Hesiod, the poet who advocated justice, also died in a manner antithetical to his life, by committing a crime. According to the story of Hesiod's death preserved in the *Contest*, which was based on Alcidamas, Hesiod was murdered by two brothers, Amphiphanes and Ganyctor, the sons of Phegeus, because they suspected that he had seduced their sister.[18] The poet's body was thrown into the sea, but it was brought back to land by dolphins during a local festival of Ariadne (*Cert.* §14).[19] This evidence of divine favor caused the Locrians to lament and bury Hesiod. His murderers fled by ship, only to be struck by Zeus's lightning bolt. The story may date back to Pindar; in the fourth century it was known to Philochorus (*FGrHist* 328 F 213) and to Aristotle (fr. 565 Rose), who wrote that the wronged sister's name was Clymene and that the son she bore as a result was Stesichorus.[20] This story may have been inspired by Hesiod's statement in the *Works and Days*, "I would not be a just man (*dikaios*) among men, nor would my son, since it is evil for a man to be just, if the more unjust man will receive greater justice; but I expect that wise Zeus will not bring this to pass" (270–74). Hesiod cannot be called a just man, and neither can the son born to the woman whom he seduced, who by definition is not *dikaios* because he is illegitimate.[21]

Later versions of the story exonerate Hesiod. In an epigram by the third-century B.C. poet Alcaeus of Messene (*HE* 70–73), the sweetness of Hesiod's song is represented in the circumstances of his burial: the Muses wash his corpse and shepherds sprinkle it with milk and honey.[22] The author of the *Contest* says that the third-century poet Eratosthenes wrote a poem about Hesiod (*Cert.* §14) in which the girl's seducer was not Hesiod but Demodes, a travel-

ing companion of Hesiod.[23] Both Hesiod and Demodes were then killed by the girl's brothers.[24] The poet's murderers were recognized by his dog and then sacrificed by the seer Eurycles to the gods of hospitality, whose laws they had violated.[25] Like his contemporaries Callimachus and Apollonius, Eratosthenes wrote about events in a manner that emphasizes their effect on the lives of all involved and limits the role of direct divine intervention.[26] A dog loyal to his master replaces the miraculous dolphins in Alcidamas' version of the story.[27] In Eratosthenes' narrative, human sacrifice replaces Zeus's lightning bolt,[28] the sister hangs herself, and her brothers are sons of Ganyctor, himself the son of the Amphidamas in whose honor the contest at Chalkis was held (fr. 17 Powell; Paus. 9.31.6). The seer Eurycles was famous for getting other people's stomachs to utter prophecies that they did not wish to hear (Ar., *Vesp*. 1029–30).[29] Like writers of mythical narratives, biographers felt free to change motivations and names, add new characters, and make new connections between events, as long as they kept to the basic outline of the traditional narrative.[30]

Additional confirmation of Hesiod's heroic status is provided by stories of Hesiod's extraordinary old age and multiple burial places. The poets Simonides and Sophocles were said to have retained their powers in old age.[31] Extraordinarily long life is characteristic of prophets. Tiresias, who lived through seven generations of men, is the example *par excellence* (fr. 276 M–W). The Cretan Epimenides, who imitated the Muses' speech to Hesiod in *Theog*. 26–28 in his pronouncement "Cretans are always liars, foul beasts, idle bellies" (3B 1 DK = *FGrHist* 457 F 2), also had an extraordinary lifespan. He was said to have fallen asleep for fifty-seven years while pasturing his sheep, and on awakening became a prophet (3A I DK = *FGrHist* 457 T 1 = Theopompus *FGrHist* 115 F 67).[32] A long lifespan provides a convenient means of accommodating chronologies that made Hesiod older than Homer.[33]

In the fourth century, Hesiod was believed to have bypassed old age altogether (Aristotle, fr. 565 Rose). The proverbial phrase "a Hesiodic old age" in the *Suda* is glossed as "extraordinary longevity" (*Suda* Tau 732 = Aristotle fr. 565 Rose); the entry also quotes an epigram attributed to the fifth-century poet Pindar (*FGE* 582–83) but which was probably written at least two centuries later:[34] "Hail, you who were twice a young man, and twice encountered a tomb, Hesiod, who set the standard among men for wisdom." A return from death, like an extraordinarily long life, is a sign of heroic status.[35] The epigram about Hesiod's twice being young and twice being buried also explains why in Hellenistic times Hesiod had two tombs, one at Oeneon in Ozolian or West Locris, where he died (Thuc. 3.96.1, which the compiler of the *Contest* confuses with

Opuntian or East Locris, *Cert.* §14) and a second burial place at Orchomenus near Thebes. The Delphic oracle ordered that Hesiod's bones be brought from Locris to Orchomenus in Boeotia in order to cure a plague, and said that a crow would show them the way to Hesiod's first burial place (schol. Hes., *Op.* 631; Paus. 9.38.3–4). Hesiod's bones were still being shown to visitors in the second century A.D. (Plut., fr. 82 Sandbach = Mor. 162c).[36] Like the bones of the heroes Orestes and Theseus (not to mention those of Oedipus at Colonus near Athens), Hesiod's remains were believed to have beneficial power.[37]

By the second century A.D. the biographical traditions about Hesiod's life appear to have been established. The anonymous author of the *Contest between Homer and Hesiod* had no new anecdotes to add.[38] Of the various accounts, he preferred a version of Hesiod's genealogy that stressed the poet's divine origin: he was descended on his father's side from Linos, son of Apollo, and from Orpheus; his mother, Pycimede, was Apollo's daughter (*Cert.* §4). The author reports both Alcidamas' and Eratosthenes' versions of Hesiod's death (*Cert.* §14) without attempting to reconcile the contradictions between them. In his treatise, the contest is followed by first the death of Hesiod and then that of Homer. He quotes the epigram Hesiod was supposed to have written when he dedicated to the Muses the tripod he won at the funeral games for Amphidamas (*Anth. Pal.* 7.53), and then relates the verse oracle predicting Hesiod's death (206 PW). Nonetheless, he leaves the impression that Hesiod is the lesser of the two poets because he gives proportionately more space to Homer. At the beginning of his treatise, he considers in detail the different traditions about Homer's genealogy; then, after the story of Hesiod's death, he recounts at length where Homer went and what he wrote before he died. In the competition, Homer easily deals with all challenges set by Hesiod.

The author of the *Contest* and thus (presumably) his audience appear to have been interested particularly in Hesiod's dates, background, death, and memorials.[39] He indicates when in his life Homer wrote the *Margites, Odyssey,* and certain epigrams, but he makes no reference to Hesiod's encounter with the Muses. Perhaps he does not wish to refer to the occasion for the composition of the *Theogony,* because the authenticity of the *Theogony* had been questioned. Pausanias records that natives of the region near Mt. Helicon claimed that the *Works and Days* was Hesiod's only poem and that it began, not as it does now, with an invocation describing Zeus's powers (*Op.* 1–10), but at line 11 with the passage about the two Strifes (9.38.4). Plutarch, another native Boeotian, also seems to have excluded the first ten lines of the poem in his edition of the text (*Mor.* 736e).[40] Plutarch seems interested in emphasizing

the poet's moral purpose; he also omits other lines where the poet appears to be questioning Zeus's power as unworthy of Hesiod's views of justice (fr. 38 Sandbach).[41] The story of the poet's death had particular appeal for him, especially in versions that demonstrated the poet's innocence (*Mor.* 162e, 984d; fr. 82). Pausanias, too, devotes twice as much space to Hesiod's death as to his life and works.

Plutarch's views about Hesiod's dates caused him to remove from his text as "nonsense" Hesiod's account of the contest at Chalkis and the dedication of his tripod (fr. 85 Sandbach).[42] Again Plutarch seems to be commenting not so much on what Hesiod himself says as on what ancient critics thought about the passage and its characterization as a contest between Homer and Hesiod. The lines had long been regarded as evidence for the contest between Hesiod and Homer, but if the two poets were considered not to be contemporaries, the notion of their contest and Hesiod's text could be regarded as fictions.[43] The poet's own words, even when supposed to be authentic, could be reinterpreted metaphorically. The orator Fronto, writing to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius in the second century A.D., speaks of Hesiod as being asleep when the Muses came to him.[44] Most ironically, scholarship in later antiquity chose to exclude the poet's own testimony from his biography.

Scholarly doubts about the events in Hesiod's life survive in his *Vita*, which served as a preface to a commentary by the fifth-century Neoplatonist scholar Proclus on which the present scholia to Hesiod are based.[45] In a biography based closely on Proclus' *Vita*, the twelfth-century scholar Tzetzes accepted as historical that Hesiod was the son of Dios and Pycimede and that he herded sheep on Mt. Helicon, since many other ancient authors had practical professions. But he could understand the Muses' epiphany only as allegory: nine women came and fed Hesiod with branches of Heliconian laurel. Tzetzes places Hesiod's encounter with the Muses early in the poet's life, even though in the *Theogony* Hesiod did not say how old he was.[46] Then, like Plutarch, Tzetzes questions the authenticity of the contest, because he thought Homer older than Hesiod, and rejects narrative fictions invented to resolve it, such as the notion of a second, younger Homer.

Tzetzes follows Aristotle's account of Hesiod's death, which makes the poet the father of Stesichorus (fr. 565 Rose) but contains no mention of narratives that exonerate the poet (such as that by Eratosthenes). Like Pausanias and the author of the treatise about the contest, Tzetzes concludes his biography of Hesiod by citing an anonymous couplet that says the poet was born in Ascra and buried in Orchomenus, which says nothing about his poetry or his

accomplishments. To this he adds as a second epitaph, the elegiac couplet attributed to Pindar (*FGE* 582–83), which claims that the poet was young twice and buried twice. In these epigrams, as in Diogenes Laertius' biographies of the Greek philosophers, death assumes a curious priority in representing the significance of a man's life and works.[47]

In its final form, Hesiod's biography seems curiously removed from the autobiographical statements in his poems, with their emphasis on his professional skill and wide-ranging knowledge of both the gods and the realities of human existence. Instead, his biographers place increasing importance on what he does *not* say about himself, providing the names of his father and of his mother, the identity of his son, his dog, and (of course) the violent manner of his death, the various identities of his murderers, and the intervention of the Delphic Oracle. From the fifth through the second century B.C., writers granted him heroic status, but in Roman times his physical encounter with the Muses was transmuted into a dream; his victory in the contest at the games for Amphidamas is disregarded as an interpolation, and he loses his precedence over Homer. Something of this diminished notion of Hesiod's value has remained up to the present day, keeping us from taking him at his word when he speaks about himself and the importance of his accomplishments.

CHAPTER TWO

Homer

The poet who composed the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is a voice without identity; it is the poetry that survives and not the person who created it. There is no information in either poem about the name or the background of the poet who composed them, or about the time in which he lived. In antiquity it was thought that he lived just after the Trojan War. Now it is thought that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were composed some centuries later, towards the end of the eighth century B.C., around the time of the development of the Greek alphabet. Despite his anonymity and the uncertainty about when Homer might have lived, readers have always wanted to know more about him and have sought to discover why and how and when the poems were composed and put into writing. In antiquity the biography of the author known as Homer became increasingly detailed as time went on. The various versions of his life served many purposes: they related his origins and his connections to different cities; they explained why he wrote nothing down and why he went by a name that seems literally to have meant "hostage." Legends about him were circulating well before the fifth century, but much of our information about Homer comes from late Hellenistic biographers who made use of earlier materials.[1] In this chapter I try to trace, in roughly chronological order, how and why these biographies were created.

Biographers started with the meager information that they could glean from the two great epics. Unlike Hesiod, who in the *Theogony* states his name (22) and in the *Works and Days* tells us about his brother and his father and boasts that he won a contest (656–57), the poet of the *Iliad* provides no personal in-

formation about himself or his family. The author of the *Iliad* gives credit for his vast knowledge to the Muses, as does Hesiod (*Theog.* 31–32).[2] But the poet of the *Iliad* describes the difference between mortal and immortal knowledge: "You are goddesses and are present and know everything, but we hear only report and do not know anything; I could not tell or name the multitude, not if I had ten voices, or ten mouths, or had an unbreakable voice, or a bronze heart within me" (*Il.* 2.485–90). About a hundred lines later he tells a story about a bard that restates how important it is for mortals to acknowledge the power of the gods: Thamyris boasted that he could beat the Muses in a singing contest, but they "maimed" him and took away his "inspired song" (*aoidēn*/*thespesiēn*) and made him forget how to play the lyre (*Il.* 2.599).[3]

Because the poet of the *Iliad* offered so little specific information about himself, biographers needed to search beyond his first-person statements. They turned to the portraits of the bards Phemius or Demodocus in the *Odyssey*, who were dependent on a king for support. Of the two, Demodocus became the more influential model, if only because he appeared to be the more accomplished performer, living as he did in the idealized world of the Phaeacians. Significantly for the depiction of Homer, who in most biographies becomes or is born blind, Demodocus' skill as a singer has a connection with the loss of his eyesight: "the Muses loved him, but they gave him both good and evil gifts; they deprived him of his eyes, but they gave him sweet song" (*Od.* 8.63–64).[4] Also like Demodocus, Homer was said to be the son of a Muse and of Apollo (*Suda*, Omicron 251 I 3 p. 525 Adler) or a direct descendant of Apollo through Orpheus (*Cert.* §4) or Musaeus (Gorgias 82 B 25 DK) in genealogies known to writers like Hellanicus (*FGrHist* 4 F 5) and Pherecydes (*FGrHist* 3 F 161) in the fifth century.[5] Other attempts to show that the poet's work was directly connected to his personal experience give Thamyris or Telemachus as Homer's father (*Cert.* §3) and Penelope as his beloved (Hermesianax, fr. 7.29–30 Powell).[6] According to the fourth-century historian Ephorus of Cyme (*FGrHist* 70 F 1), Homer studied poetry with a school teacher called Phemius (the bard in Odysseus' household, *Od.* 1.153–55). In the detailed Life of Homer whose writer claims to be the historian Herodotus, other characters from the *Odyssey* find their way into his biography (*Vit. Hdt.* 6, 7). Mentes (*Od.* 1.105) takes Homer to his homeland, Ithaca, to stay with Mentor (*Od.* 1.180–81). Having Telemachus as father or Mentes as friend helps to account for Homer's detailed knowledge of the remote island of Ithaca.

Other biographical data was generated by analogy. In retrospect, Hesiod and Homer were imagined to have resembled their successors, the itinerant

singers and rhapsodes who traveled and sang in contests at religious festivals.[7] In the *Iliad* Homer describes Thamyris as such a traveling poet, because it was not in his native Thrace but at Dorion in Messenia that Thamyris boasted that he could defeat the Muses in a singing contest (2.595–600).[8] In a fragment of a lost poem, Hesiod says that he and Homer first sang as bards in Delos, "stitching (*rhapsantes*) song in new hymns" for Apollo (fr. 357 M–W). The singer of the *Homeric Hymn to Delian Apollo* does not use the name of Homer but indirectly identifies himself as Homer by saying that he is blind like Demodocus and the "sweetest of singers" (*Hymn. Hom.* 3.169; the Muse gave Demodocus "sweet song" in *Od.* 8.62). But it is clear that the singer of the *Homeric Hymn* could not be the author of the great epics, because he says that his songs "excel afterwards," a claim that would be impossible to make if the Homeric poems had not already been famous (*Hymn. Hom.* 3.173).[9]

The singer of the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* also knows about aspects of Homer's life that are not mentioned in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. Most notably, he specifies that he comes from the island of Chios (172). In the sixth century, the account giving Chios as Homer's place of origin was so well-known that the poet Semonides of Amorgos could say "the man from Chios" and assume that his audience would know he meant the author of the *Iliad* (fr. 29 W).[10] The island was then the home of the singers who called themselves "sons of Homer" or Homeridae (Acusilaus 9 F 22 DK).[11] Pindar, in the fifth century, described the Homeridae as "bards, singers of words stitched (*rhaptōn*) together" (*Nem.* 2.1–2). The process of *stitching* indicates that these singers were improvisers as well as performers.[12]

But by the fifth century there was another story about Homer's origin. Pindar is quoted as saying that Homer came from both Chios and Smyrna (fr. 264 = Ps.-Plu., *Vit. Hom.* 2.2). Unfortunately we have no idea of the context(s) in which he spoke about Homer's birthplace. Quite possibly such inconsistencies were less troublesome to him and his audience than they are to us. Pindar was adept at telling one version of a myth while simultaneously recalling another, contradictory version.[13] Both birthplaces are mentioned by other writers in the fifth century (Stesimbrotus *FGrHist* 107 F 22, Simonides fr. 652 *PMG* = fr. 8 W). In his account of Homer's life, the fourth-century historian Ephorus claimed that the poet was born in Cyme in Asia Minor, Ephorus' own birthplace. Philochorus proposed Argos, because of the importance of Mycenae in the *Iliad* (*FGrHist* 328 F 209). Later writers suggested Pylos and Athens, to account for complimentary references in the poems (e.g., *Vit. Hdt.* 28). By Hellenistic times, more places had been added to the list of possibilities: Ithaca,

Salamis, Ios, and even Egypt, Cyprus, and Thessaly.[14] Clearly, no one account of the poet's origin ever became canonical.

By contrast, there seems never to have been any dispute about where Homer died. The fourth-century orator Alcidamas, in his *Mouseion*, placed Homer's death on the island of Ios. A fragment of his narrative survives on papyrus (fr. 7 Avezzù = fr. 27 Muir):[15]

> When they saw him, they improvised this line "those we caught we left behind and those we did not catch, we bring." He could not find the meaning of what they said. They told him that they had been fishing and caught nothing, but that when they sat down to de-louse themselves, they left behind the lice they caught, but that those they did not catch they brought with them in their clothes. He remembered the oracle, that here was the conclusion of his life, and he wrote this epigram about himself: "Here the earth covers the sacred head, the glorifier of heroes, divine Homer." After that he went where there was mud and fell on his side and thus (as they say) he died.

We know from a version of the same story told by Heraclitus at the beginning of the fifth century that the riddle was posed to Homer by boys:

> Humans are deceived in their understanding of appearances, particularly Homer, who was wiser (*sophōteros*) than all the Greeks. Boys delousing themselves deceived him when they said: "Those we had seen and caught, we left behind, but those we did not see or catch, we bring." (22 B 56, I 163 DK)

Heraclitus uses the anecdote as an illustration of the limits of human understanding: even the wisest of all men, Homer, could be deceived, because he assumed that the boys were talking about fish rather than lice. But in Alcidamas' account the story has a supernatural significance. Like Hesiod, he had been warned in a prophecy of the circumstances of his death but nonetheless failed to avoid it. When the poet cannot understand what the boys are saying, he remembers that an oracle had warned him that he would die when he no longer had the power to understand more than other mortals. Homer then has the presence of mind to compose his own epitaph, and dies quietly, after he has slipped and fallen in the mud. The anecdote has some elements in common with the story of the death of Heracles. The great hero had been told by his father, Zeus, that he would be killed by a dead person. He was only able to understand that riddle after it was too late, when he learned that his skin was being eaten away by the blood of the centaur Nessus, whom he had killed long before (Soph., *Trach.* 1159–63).[16]

Alcidamas concludes his account of Homer's life with a brief explanation of why he has written the biography:

> On this we shall try to make our reputation, especially since we see that historians are admired. Indeed on account of this Homer both in life and in death has been honored by all mankind. So publishing this in thanks for the entertainment, let us hand down through accurate recollection his origin and his other poetry to the common possession of those Greeks who wish to be lovers of the beautiful. (fr. 7 Avezzù = fr. 27 Muir)

Despite some uncertainties in the text, it is possible to see that Alcidamas believes that by providing an account Homer's life he would be enhancing his own reputation (*aretē*), as well as offering thanks to the great poet for his entertainment and the beauty of his verse. It is also interesting that by composing this narrative he is acting as an "historian" (*historikos*). Perhaps he saw himself as a provider of a narrative framework for Homer's "other poetry" (*poiēsis*), such as the epitaph Homer wrote for his burial place and the other poems attributed to Homer in antiquity.[17]

The biography of Homer by Aristotle (384–322 B.C.), in the third book of his now-lost treatise *On Poets* (fr. 76 Rose = F 20.1 Gigon = Ps.-Plu. 1, *Vit. Hom.* 1. 3–4) provides new details about Homer's earlier life.[18] According to Aristotle, the poet's mother was Critheis, a native of Ios, who was a contemporary of Neleus the son of Codrus, legendary founder of Miletus, who would have lived in the eleventh century B.C. Critheis became pregnant by a divinity (*daimon*) who danced along with the Muses.[19] She sailed to Aegina to avoid disgrace but was captured by pirates and brought to Smyrna, then under Lydian rule, where King Maeon married her. She gave birth to a son near the river Meles and died soon after. Maeon adopted the baby, who was named Melesigenes after his birthplace.[20] When the Lydians abandoned Smyrna to the Aeolians, the boy wished to accompany them (*homērein*) and after that was called Homer.[21] When he grew up and became a poet he asked the oracle about his parents and was told that his mother came from Ios, that he would die there, and to beware of a riddle from young men.[22] While on his way to a singing contest at Thebes, his ship brought him to Ios, and there he encountered fishermen delousing themselves who asked him the riddle: "What we caught we left behind and what we did not catch we bring." When Homer could not solve the riddle, he died from depression. The people of Ios gave him a magnificent funeral, and they (not Homer himself) wrote the epitaph for his tomb: "Here the earth covers the sacred head, the glorifier of heroes, divine Homer." In Aristotle's

narrative, Homer is less self-possessed than in Alcidamas' account. He dies from depression, unable even to write his own epitaph.[23]

Because Aristotle's narrative survives only in summary, we cannot know exactly what emphasis he would have given to the different sections of the story. Clearly it incorporated elements found in myth and fairy tale into an exciting, almost novelistic plot.[24] The poet, like many heroes, is the son of a divinity.[25] His survival is ensured by a series of lucky coincidences, and he is warned by an oracle of the circumstances of his death. But Aristotle apparently tried, so far as possible, to make the story sound more like an historical account by setting it in a particular chronological context and by providing rationales for the poet's change of name from Melesigenes to Homer and his association with different places: why else introduce the story about Homer wishing to "accompany" the Lydians when they abandoned Smyrna or account for his name by claiming that it derived from *homērein* ("accompany") rather than from *homēros* ("hostage"), or specify that his mother was sailing from Ios to Aegina but was brought to Smyrna? The narrative also furnished a framework for the oracles about his death, the riddle of the fishermen and lice, and the composition of his epitaph. As in Alcidamas' biography, the poet dies because he has lost the knowledge that brought him fame during his lifetime.

Certainly, in the fourth century the manner of Homer's death and the verses associated with it were fixed elements in the narrative; so were the names Cretheis (or Critheis), Maeon, and Melesigenes. But individual historians were free to supply motivations and other details to the narrative. In Aristotle Homer's father had been an unnamed divinity, but Ephorus avoids the supernatural in his version of the story. We might compare the way in which Herodotus portrays Io as a victim of a slaving raid by Phoenicians, without ever mentioning Zeus or Hera or the story of her metamorphosis into a cow; Herodotus also says that Europa was abducted in a counter-raid, without any reference to Zeus's disguising himself as a white bull (1.1.1). According to Ephorus, Homer was born in Cyme rather than Smyrna. His real father was Maeon, his mother's brother, not a divinity (Ps.-Plu., *Vit. Hom.* 1.2 = *FGrHist* 70 F 1). Ephorus accounts for the name Homer by claiming that the Cymeans and Ionians call those who are visually impaired "those who serve as hostages" (*homēreuontes*), a "fact" not attested elsewhere but which nonetheless is incorporated into later biographies; presumably Ephorus or his source invented it to suit his purpose.

Despite the presence of such obvious fictions in their narratives, it is to writers of accounts such as these that Alcidamas appears to be referring when

he says that he "sees historians (*historikoi*) being admired" (fr. 7 Avezzù = fr. 27 Muir). Certainly Aristotle, Ephorus, and Alcidamas could be called historians in the sense that they conducted investigations, tried to make sense of their data, and (so far as they could) placed events in a particular chronology, as Aristotle did by dating Homer in the third generation after the Athenian hero Codrus. Their original narratives were more sophisticated than the summaries on which we are now compelled to rely.[26] Like Herodotus and Thucydides, Alcidamas has ethical goals, which he makes explicit. He wants his memoir to be "a common possession of the Greeks." The anonymous author of the *Contest between Homer and Hesiod*, who draws on Alcidamas' *Mouseion*, also universalizes Homer by connecting him physically to some of the many Greek cities who had some claim on him.

Although biographical historians (to use that term in the sense that Alcidamas uses it) relied on mythical patterns to provide a general narrative trajectory for the story of Homer's life, they added information from his epics to give his story individuality and verisimilitude. The bards Phemius and Demodocus in the *Odyssey* were based in royal homes. But Homer in the Lives is more like one of the rhapsodes who traveled from city to city performing the epics in the biographers' own lifetimes.[27] He is depicted as a working man, like a rhapsode, even though in some accounts he has the divine ancestry requisite for a hero. Although he becomes famous, he never acquires the wealth he would need to retire from traveling.

The biographers, like historians, used their narratives to explain discrepancies in the traditions that had come down to them. Did Homer write all the works that were later attributed to him? Problems of attribution and transmission could be solved through biography. Homer, at a loss for what to give his daughter as a dowry, gave her the *Cypria*, according to a fifth-century poet, either Pindar or Stasinus (Ael. *VH* ix.15 = Pind. fr. 265). Did Homer or Creophylus write the *Sack of Oechalia*? Creophylus was either Homer's friend (Pl. *Resp.* 600b) or his son-in-law (*Suda*, Kappa 2376). Creating some such relationship was an efficient way of begging the question of authenticity that was still unresolved in third-century Alexandria (Callimachus, Epigr. 6 Pf = 1293–96 *HE*). The third-century Sicilian historian Hippostratus spoke of Homeridae descended from Homer, who sang his poetry by right of succession (*ek diadochēs*), and of rhapsodes called Homeridae, who no longer claimed descent, among them a Cynaethus of Chios, who both interpolated lines into Homer's poetry and wrote the *Hymn to Apollo* and attributed it to Homer (Cynaethus T 1 Davies = *FGrHist* 568 F 4 = schol. Pind., *Nem.* 2.1). By saying that Cynaethus was not

descended from Homer, Hippostratus indicated that the former's poems were not authentically Homeric.[28]

Another consistent feature in the biographies is an emphasis on rejection.[29] The epigrams ascribed to Homer that are quoted in the biographies describe repeated incidents in which the poet is not appreciated or is treated inhospitably. These epigrams may date back to the fifth century B.C., as may the riddle posed by the fisher-boys quoted by Heraclitus and the epitaph for Homer quoted by Alcidamas.[30] In the epigrams Homer's talent invites resentment. He is not welcome even in his hometown of Cyme, where he asks for support because of his "holy voice and words of his song" but instead is insulted (Epigram 4).[31] He complains to a certain Thestorides of the unpredictability of human behavior (Epigram 5). He asks for revenge on sailors who deceived him, on the grounds that they angered Zeus, the god who protects strangers (Epigram 8); he curses a pine tree (Epigram 10) and an old woman (Epigram 12) and threatens to curse potters if they do not pay him for his singing (Epigram 14). The world he describes is hostile: the earth can be angry and cruel towards some people (Epigram 7); dogs bark and must be fed because they protect the house (Epigram 11); a home wins praise for having a fire in it (Epigram 13). With the addition of prose glosses that attach them to specific situations and cities, the epigrams can be used to tell of the life of a lonely wanderer, compelled to struggle against the world. Plato knew of a tradition that told how Homer had been greatly neglected by his friend Creophylus during his lifetime, and he contrasts it to Pythagoras' treatment as a hero by his followers (*Resp.* 10. 600b–c = *Oechaliae Halosis* T 1 Davies = T 3 Bernabé).[32]

In the Hellenistic age and after, conscious attempts were made to bring order to the chaos of the variant traditions about Homer and to restore some of the honor the great poet seemed to deserve. New epigrams were composed that listed the names of all the cities that claimed Homer as their son and reached the conclusion that he belonged to no one city but to all of Greece.[33] Instead of making Homer an illegitimate child, one epigram (*Anth. Pal.* 14.102) from the Roman period claims that his parents were Telemachus and Polycaste, Nestor's daughter. Other Hellenistic epigrams concerned the contest at Aulis where he was supposed to have competed with Hesiod, and the occasion of his death. But none related the demeaning stories of inhospitality recorded in the older epigrams that were attributed to Homer himself.

The author of the treatise *The Contest between Homer and Hesiod* (*Certamen*), who wrote during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian (A.D. 76–138), drew on Alcidamas as well as many other earlier historians, though he refers to only

some of them by name.[34] He reports events in Homer's life without editorial comment and without seeming to distinguish among the relative historical merits of his sources. But to regard his work as naïve is to misunderstand his purpose.[35] He did not see himself as a historian in the modern sense of the word, but rather as Alcidamas appears to have defined the term, a recorder of tradition, who was at liberty to present his material in credible ways that would impart a general truth about his subject. He mentions the various accounts of Homer's parentage and birthplace but states that the account in which he has the most trust is the oracle given to the Emperor Hadrian, which said that Homer was born on Ithaca to Telemachus and Polycaste (*Cert.* §3 = 465 PW).[36] He also observes that, although some accounts make Homer older or younger than Hesiod, he thinks that they flourished at the same time, so they could have met in Aulis (*Cert.* §4). He makes it clear that Homer was undoubtedly the more facile and popular performer of the two, with a greater appeal to audiences than Hesiod had. When Hesiod posed a conundrum, Homer was able to improvise an immediate answer (*Cert.* §8).[37] Any narrative that Hesiod began, Homer was able to complete (*Cert.* §9); "Homer was superior throughout" (*Cert.* §11). Nonetheless, in the *Contest*, King Panedes awards the victory to Hesiod, because his poetry encouraged people towards agriculture and peace, as opposed to wars and slaughter. The outcome is similar to that of the contest between Aeschylus and Euripides in Aristophanes' *Frogs*. The god Dionysus had come to Hades to bring back his favorite dramatist, Euripides, but instead brought back Aeschylus, on the grounds that his poetry is morally superior.[38] Could a fifth- or fourth-century version of the story of Hesiod's victory over Homer, perhaps created by Alcidamas, have influenced Aristophanes, or vice versa?

In his *Republic* Plato also made ethical value the standard by which poetry should be judged. In his view, Homer is merely an imitator, whose art rouses emotions but does not inspire rational thinking (605b–c). There is no place for him, or indeed for any tragic poets, in the ideal state that Socrates describes. Socrates tells Glaucon:

> When you encounter encomiasts of Homer who say that this poet has educated Greece and that for the daily life and education of human affairs he is worthy of study and that one should order everything in one's life according to that poet, we should befriend and embrace these encomiasts for doing the best that they can, and agree that Homer is the most poetic and the first of the tragic poets,

> but at the same time we must understand that we can receive into our city only hymns to the gods and praise of noble men. (*Resp.* 10.606e–607a)

Such negative judgments of the content of Homer's poetry appear to have been reflected in the low social status accorded to him in the biographical tradition: for all his ability to improvise and his vast repertory, to the end of his life he remains an indigent traveling bard, feeble, vulnerable, and homeless.

In the *Contest*, after losing to Hesiod, Homer goes around reciting his poems; first the *Thebaid*, then the *Odyssey* (though not the *Iliad*, although he had already composed it). The narrative accounts for his association with certain cities: he wrote Epigram 3 for the sons of Midas; he visits Athens, where he composed Epigram 13 for King Medon; then he goes to Argos, and finally to Ios to visit Creophylus and there encounters the fisher-boys. As in Alcidamas' *Mouseion*, Homer remembers the prophecy about his death and composes his own epitaph, then slips in the mud and dies; there are no public honors connected with his epitaph as there were in Aristotle's account (18).

The author of the *Contest* indicates clearly to his readers that he is writing as their contemporary; he mentions the oracle that "we have heard to have been spoken to the most sacred Emperor Hadrian" (3). But the author of another biography, the longest of the surviving biographies of Homer, pretends that he is the famous fifth-century historian Herodotus, even though he almost certainly lived in the early centuries A.D.[39] This Pseudo-Herodotus begins his narrative by asserting its historical accuracy: "Herodotus of Halicarnassus wrote the following history of Homer's background, upbringing, and life, and sought to make his account complete and absolutely reliable." This opening bears a close resemblance to the forged history by Dictys of Crete, who claims, "[W]hen by chance some books had come into our hands, the desire for true history came over us to put them into Latin" (*Ephemeris* 1.14 Eisenhut).[40] Unlike the author of the *Contest,* Pseudo-Herodotus cites no sources or conflicting opinions about Homer's ancestry or adventures but offers a straight narrative account of Homer's life. Pseudo-Herodotus' and Dictys' audiences were not necessarily deceived by these protestations of veracity; in late antiquity, fanciful "correspondence" between persons long dead, like Stesichorus and Phalaris, had some of the popular appeal of modern historical novels. For example, Alciphron, at the end of the second century A.D., composed a book of letters between the third century B.C. comic poet Menander and his *hetaira* Glycera, whose name appears to have been derived from the heroines of sev-

eral of Menander's plays.[41] But the existence and apparent success of the fictitiously authored *Historia Augusta* indicates that an audience for learned fraud existed and might be exploited.[42]

The biography by Pseudo-Herodotus attempts with considerable ingenuity to account for most of the major traditions about Homer's parentage, birthplace, wanderings, and death. It helps to explain Homer's connections with both Cyme and Smyrna, as well as his learning and knowledge of various Greek dialects. It reports that Homer was born in Cyme, a city with colonists from all over the Greek world. His mother, Cretheis, was ward of an Argive. After she became pregnant by a stranger, she went to Smyrna to live with a Boeotian. There she gave birth to a son beside the river Meles, and he was called Melesigenes.

Pseudo-Herodotus' narrative of Homer's early life also accounts for his connection with Ithaca. Cretheis earned her living by doing menial work for local people, including the school teacher Phemius (the name of Odysseus' bard). Phemius was impressed with her diligence and offered to marry her and educate her son. Later, Melesigenes took over Phemius' school, but he closed it down and left Cyme after a rich ship owner from Leucas called Mentes (the name of a friend of Odysseus) offered to take him on a sea voyage to the western Mediterranean. When Melesigenes developed eye trouble, he stayed with Mentor the Ithacan (yet another of Odysseus' friends), from whom he learned about Ithaca.

The next section of the story accounts for the composition of some of the poems later attributed to Homer. Mentes took Melesigenes to Colophon in Asia Minor, where he became blind.[43] He then went to Smyrna and decided to compose poetry. Pseudo-Herodotus does not explain how Homer learned the technique of verse composition; he appears to have had no teacher.[44] After Smyrna, Homer went to Neon Teichos, a colony of Cyme, and composed the first of his epigrams. There he was treated kindly by a shoemaker named Tychius (the name of the man who made Ajax's famous shield; *Il.* 7.218–21).[45] While in Neon Teichos Melesigenes composed *Amphiaraus*' *Expedition to Thebes* and the *Homeric Hymns.* Melesigenes then went to Cyme, where the blind are called *homēroi*, and from there he got the name Homer.[46] But the Cymean city fathers did not give him the public support he asked for, and so he wrote Epigram 4. From Cyme he went to Phocaea. He stayed with Thestorides, and he dedicated the *Little Iliad* to him, but Thestorides tried to steal it (hence Epigram 5) and went off to the island of Chios.

Pseudo-Herodotus allows Chios to play an important role in Homer's bi-

ography by having him follow Thestorides there. Homer's journey took him to Pitys ("Pine Tree," where he composed Epigram 10, about the pine cone), a town on Chios. There he was surrounded by barking dogs and rescued by Glaucus (the name of the sympathetic Lycian warrior in *Il.* 6). Glaucus introduced him to his master, who made him tutor to his children. When Thestorides discovered that Homer was on Chios, he left the island. Homer established himself there, married a local woman, and had two daughters. It was in Chios that he composed *The Battle of the Frogs*, the *Battle of the Starlings*, and other minor poems. He also composed the *Odyssey* (in which he honors Mentes, Mentor, and Phemius) and the *Iliad* (in which he mentions Tychius). Homer then sets out for mainland Greece, landing first lands at Samos, where he spends the winter and composes the two short epigrams cursing the old lady and praising the fire (Epigrams 12, 13), plus the *Kiln Song* (Epigram 14) and the *Eiresione* song (Epigrams 15). Finally Homer goes to Ios, where, after speaking with the fisher-boys, he dies, but because he is ill, not because he could not answer their riddle. Pseudo-Herodotus, like Aristotle, says explicitly that the Homer did not write his own epitaph but that it was composed by the people of Ios long after his death.

During the course of his narrative, Pseudo-Herodotus does even more to improve the poet's stature than does the author of the treatise on the contest. In the *Contest,* Homer dies when he cannot answer the fisher-boys' riddle about the lice (*Cert.* §18). In Pseudo-Herodotus, not only does the poet die from illness rather than ignorance (§36), but the boys' taunt gives Homer an opportunity to compose an insulting epigram about their low descent (§35, *Epigram* 16). In Pseudo-Herodotus' biography, from the beginning of his life Homer's talent wins recognition. Where Ephorus said (*FGrHist* 70 F 1) that Homer was the product of an incestuous union between Critheis and her brother Maion and that his uncle Maion married off his mother to the local school-teacher, Pseudo-Herodotus leaves the identity of Homer's father a mystery and has the schoolmaster marry his mother because he likes her work and admires her son. Homer takes over his stepfather's school, has his passage to Ithaca paid by a merchant friend, is later made tutor to the children of a wealthy Chian, and finally establishes his own school in Chios. Pseudo-Herodotus has Homer write an epigram for Midas' tomb early in his career (11, Epigram 3), not after the contest (as in *Cert.* §15), because in his account, Homer's talent was recognized from the start.

Pseudo-Herodotus also does his best to demonstrate why Homer has strong connections to Chios. In this narrative Homer is warmly received on that is-

land, and it is there that he writes his minor and comic works, for the children of his Chian benefactor, thus providing an explanation for their comic subject matter and low quality (24).[47] In a similar way Vergil's biographers explained the *Culex* and *Ciris*, by making them creations of the poet's early manhood (*Vit. Donat.* 17).[48] According to Pseudo-Herodotus, Homer wrote both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* while he was on Chios (26–28). In his discussion, Pseudo-Herodotus never states explicitly that he is dealing with questions of authenticity, but questions about the relevance of special praise for Athens had been raised since at least the fourth century B.C.[49] Pseudo-Herodotus responds to claims that the passages were inserted by Solon or Pisistratus by having Homer himself compose the verses praising Athens, in anticipation a trip to that city and to mainland Greece. He prefaces his story by citing two lines about Athens whose authenticity was never questioned, after which three questionable passages, cited out of context, appear as appropriate as the first. Pseudo-Herodotus ignores the tradition recorded in the *Contest* that Homer wrote the great epics in mainland Greece after a visit to the Delphic oracle (*Cert.* §16).

In Pseudo-Herodotus' account, Homer's difficulties derive not from defects of character but from his physical dependence on others. Pseudo-Herodotus constantly reminds his audience of the problems caused by blindness: Homer must be led from place to place, addressed slowly and with consideration (13), not only greeted but embraced (18, 19) and reassured (24). But even so, blindness gives Homer a seer's status and divine protection: fishermen who refuse to take him on board are driven back by adverse winds (19); he manages to arrive at Pitys, in the center of the island of Chios, without a guide (21). A crowd of people gather round him as he lies dying on the beach at Ios, and they bury him after his death (36).

In his narrative Pseudo-Herodotus painstakingly accounts for all the epigrams attributed to Homer. The biographer makes it clear that it was Homer and not Thestorides who wrote the *Little Iliad*. He makes no reference to Creophylus of Samos, who was credited elsewhere with the authorship of the *Sack of Oechalia,* but gives him the opportunity to have written this work as well, by having Homer visit the island of Samos (34).[50] He further enhances Homer's stature by making no reference to the famous contest at Chalkis that Hesiod won. In this biography Homer is never defeated, and no one is given opportunity to criticize the content of his poetry. His international reputation and connection with mainland cities are explained in other ways. In part his associations with mainland Greece, it says, can be accounted for by his ancestry: his grandparents come from Magnesia, his mother's first guardian from Argos,

her second from Boeotia; he traveled to Ithaca and the western Mediterranean as a young man, before his eyesight failed. As Wilamowitz suggested, Pseudo-Herodotus' account of Homer's genealogy preserves traces of folk epic.[51] But primarily, the narrative is a sophisticated literary production designed to explain how a man who was largely associated with Ionia and the eastern islands came to know so much about the rest of Greece. Like other writers of local history, Pseudo-Herodotus uses the past to accommodate the interest and present needs of his audience.[52]

Remarkably (at least to us), neither Pseudo-Herodotus nor his sources seem to have been interested in trying to understand the mechanics of Homer's art. Pseudo-Herodotus does not suggest how an itinerant poet could commit so much to memory and easily revise it, or how he was able to learn so much without the guidance of another poet or tradition, nor how his songs were preserved. He accepts Homer's achievement as anomalous. He is concerned, rather, with showing how Homer's talent was immediately apparent to everyone he encountered in his lifetime, from educated men like the school teacher Phemius and the rich Chian to ordinary townspeople and working men throughout Ionia. In this respect, his biography is in fact "complete and absolutely reliable," since surviving papyri offer testimony that even in late antiquity Homer remained the most popular author in the Greek-speaking world.[53]

If Pseudo-Herodotus describes Homer as a person who endured terrible hardship, rather than try to explain what made him an extraordinary genius, he may have done so in order to allow his audience more readily to tolerate his great success without resentment and envy. We might compare how the great hero Heracles was characterized in popular myth. For all his accomplishments, including victories over death in three different forms, Heracles is also portrayed as a glutton and a buffoon, as in Euripides' *Alcestis*. He spends longer in slavery than any other god or hero. His flaws emphasize his humanity.[54] Representations in art also tended to reduce Homer's achievement to the comprehensible. In the Homereion created by Ptolemy IV in the late third century, we are told, a seated statue of Homer was surrounded by statues of the cities that claimed him. A painting by Galaton showed other poets collecting water that spewed from the Homer's mouth (Ael., *VH* 13.22); the painting offered a visual representation of the Hellenistic notion that Homer was like Oceanus, the source of all rivers and springs (Callim., *Hymn* 2.105–13; *Lyrica Adespota* 10.14–16 Powell).[55] A second-century relief shows him seated with symbolic representations of his works around him; Ptolemy and Arsinoe and personifi-

cations of the types of poetry and learning are in attendance.[56] By the first century A.D., audiences could learn about the *Iliad* in live performances of epic battle scenes by *homēristai* (Petron., *Sat.* 59. 3–7; Artem. 4.2). A sixth-century A.D. poet describes a late Hellenistic statue in Constantinople that shows a bee carrying a honeycomb out of Homer's mouth (*Anth. Pal.* 2.342–43).[57] Like the biographies, these tangible representations tell us that Homer was famous and influential, without trying to explain or analyze the nature of his talent.

The other surviving Lives of Homer all appear to have been written after the second century A.D.[58] Two are attributed to Plutarch. The first of these was intended as an introduction to the *Iliad*. It provides information about the poet's origins and death. It summarizes Ephorus' and Aristotle's accounts of his parentage and birthplace, quotes the oracles that predicted the poet's death, and briefly discusses the tradition that Homer came from Colophon. The second of the Lives attributed to Plutarch summarizes the principal theories of his origin and attempts to establish his *floruit*. Later Lives cover the same ground, offering new explanations for his blindness and omitting any reference to the oracles about his death. Two also quote an epigram attributed to Pisistratus, who was tyrant of Athens in the mid-sixth century: "I brought together the songs of Homer that had had previously been scattered," and proposes that Homer be considered an Athenian citizen, since Athens colonized Smyrna (*FGE* 1182–87 *FGE* = *Vitae Scorialenses.* I.2, II.4 = *Vitae* 8–9 West).[59] The epigram was almost certainly not written by Pisistratus himself, since it offers a succinct summary of his career. Our earliest sources for a Pisistratean recension date from the fourth century B.C. The epigram's focus on the question of Homer's birthplace and the origin of his texts suggest that it dates from the Hellenistic age, because epigrams from the archaic period usually emphasize the virtues of the deceased or the manner of his or her death. By Cicero's day it was commonly believed that Pisistratus had assembled what had come to be known as the text of Homer; but it is more likely that the notion of such a recension was created in order to explain the presence of Attic forms in poems that were supposed to have come from Asia Minor.[60]

Other theories of Homer's origins derived from ethnography. The author of the so-called Roman Life of Homer records that Aristodemus of Nysa claimed that Homer was Roman, on the basis of similarities in customs (*Vit. Rom.* 2), specifically the playing of the board game *pessoi* (e.g., *Od.* 1.107) and the practice of rising to greet guests (e.g., *Il.* 9.192).[61] A character in Heliodorus' novel *Ethiopian Story* claims that Homer was an Egyptian because of his understanding of the nature of divinity (3.12–15). In the third century B.C., Zenodotus, a

follower of the Cynic philosopher Crates, argued that Homer came from Babylon because of his knowledge of astrology (schol. *Il*. 23.79b). The late-second-century poet Meleager of Gadara in Syria claimed that Homer was a Syrian because, like the Homeric heroes, Syrians did not eat fish (Ath. iv.157b).[62]

The authors of these summary Lives appear to be more interested in scholarly debate than in the poet's character. Their Homers appear even less heroic than the depictions from the Hellenistic era. The gods no longer intervene in his life, and the poet dies of depression because he cannot answer the riddle posed to him by the fisher-boys. These last biographers leave the impression that they have little faith in the information about Homer that has come down to them. Certainly we are not much better off today. If we know anything about the biography of Homer, it is that no surviving account of his life was ever accepted as canonical. Although it is clear that the idea that he was a blind traveling singer derives from his poetry, much of the other information in his biography comes from sources that mostly remain unknown to us. All that is certain is that every Greek city wanted to have some connection with him. In that way, if in no other, his biographies reflect the importance of his work in the education of Greek children, and indeed in ancient Greek civilization.

Eight Archaic Poets

Virtually all ancient poetry was performed in public before an audience. Unlike most modern poetry, it was not intended to be read in private and was usually not confessional or personal. First-person statements in epic poems tend to be concentrated on the roles that the poets gave to themselves in their compositions, as bards or singers inspired by the Muses. But the first-person speakers in non-epic poetry express opinions about subjects other than poetry and performance, and hence appear to have more distinctive personalities. Sometimes the "I" in ancient poetry can even be someone other than the poet, as for example in the songs that the poet Alcman wrote for choruses of maidens. In most cases biographers appear to have assumed that first-person statements were spoken by the poets, unless the speakers were obviously otherwise identified, either by name or by grammatical markers. The presence of such "personal" information distinguishes the biographies of archaic poets from the epic poets and from each other, so that they appear to be the first real personalities in ancient Greek literature.

Because the works of the majority of archaic poets have come down to us only in fragments or in quotation, it can be difficult or even impossible to discover the original source material on which any individual poet's biography was based. But enough survives to give us a general sense of how characterizations of the poets' lives grew out of the kind of poetry they composed, and of how the contexts of their songs began to shape the narrative structures of their biographies.

The poet Archilochus appears to have flourished in the first half of the

seventh century, writing poems about ordinary events of life, love affairs, military campaigns, and civil strife.[1] The characteristic passion with which he describes feelings, coupled with his use of emphatic repetition and vivid metaphors, gives the impression that he is personally involved in the events that he describes in his poems. Archaeological evidence confirms that, in some cases at least, he is talking about real persons and places.[2] The island of Thasos was settled around the time he is said to have gone there to found a colony, in obedience to the Delphic oracle.[3] An epitaph of the seventh century (T1 Tarditi) commemorates his friend Glaucus, whom he addresses in two of his surviving poems (fr. 105.1, 131.1 W) and mentions in several others.[4] Whether he himself actually ever went to Thasos is an open question, because we cannot be sure that all first-person statements in his poems were spoken in the poet's own person.[5] After his death, Archilochus was honored by the citizens of his native Paros as a hero.

Archilochus' ancient biographers tended to concentrate on the more destructive aspects of his surviving poetry. In their narratives and anecdotes there is little trace of the Archilochus who consoles his friend Pericles (fr. 13 W = 10 Tarditi), disdains riches (fr. 19 W = 22 Tarditi), or reveres the gods (fr. 26, 30 W = 30, 94 Tarditi). The fifth-century poet Pindar, a poet who was obliged to praise winners in athletic contests, contrasts himself to Archilochus who "full of blame, mostly in desperation, fattens himself on heavy-spoken hatreds" (*Pythian* 2.55–56 = T 133, 161 Tarditi).[6] The late fifth-century writer and politician Critias claimed that Archilochus was responsible for his own bad reputation:

> If he had not published to the Greeks such an opinion about himself, we should not have learned that he was the son of Enipo, a slave woman, nor that he left Paros because of poverty and desperation and went to Thasos, nor that after he got there he became the enemy of the inhabitants, nor indeed that he slandered friends and enemies alike. In addition, we would not have known that he was an adulterer, if we had not heard it from him, nor that he was lecherous and arrogant, and what is even more shameful than all this, that he threw away his shield. So Archilochus was not a good witness on his own behalf when he left behind such a memory and reputation for himself (fr. 295 W = 88 B 44 DK).

Like Critias, Aristotle accepted the principle that a man's character determined the nature of his poetry: "The serious-minded among them would represent noble actions and the deeds of noble persons [in their poetry], the light-weights among them the deeds of insignificant men" (*Poet.* I 448b 25).[7]

Enough of Archilochus' poetry survives to confirm that (as Critias observed) Archilochus' own poetry was the source of his biography.[8] He writes about leaving Paros (fr. 116 W); he attacks antagonists mercilessly in his poetry (fr. 30–87, 172–84, 234, 96, 167 W); he describes how he makes love to a young girl in a meadow (fr. 196a W) and other sexual encounters (e.g., fr. 118, 119, 191 W). A famous epigram attributed to him describes how he threw away his shield and saved himself (fr. 5 W = *FGE* 532–35). Even if the epigram itself is not authentic, it is clear from Critias' observations that it was based on one of Archilochus' own compositions.[9] Since Archilochus speaks of himself as well-born (*agathos,* fr. 25 W, cf. 225), the idea that he was the son of a slave woman named Enipo might have been inspired by verses (now lost) in which he said that he was "the child of abuse" (*enipē*).[10] A biographer could easily have deduced from that kind of statement that his mother's name was Enipo, the way the name of Hesiod's father Dios was derived from Perses' epithet *dion genos*. Charges of illegitimacy or low birth were standard in both comedy and rhetoric.[11]

The inhabitants of Archilochus' native Paros nonetheless honored him, as the late fifth-century orator Alcidamas observed:[12]

> Everyone honors the wise (*sophoi*). The Parians have honored Archilochus although he was a slanderer (*blasphēmos*) and the Chians have honored Homer although he was not one of their citizens, and the Mytileneans have honored Sappho although she is a woman, and the Spartans made Chilon one of their senators although they were not literary, and the people of Lampsacus buried Anaxagoras although he was a foreigner and honor him to this day (Alcidamas fr. 3 Muir = Ar. *Rhet.* 1398b = Catalogue XXX I 1 Clay).

Although in this passage Alcidamas does not specify what he meant by honoring (*tīmān*), he is almost certainly referring to the special privileges accorded to heroes. Such honors would include sacrifices, written memorials, sanctuaries (*temenoi*), and images, all of which would be maintained at public expense.[13] We know that in Paros in the third century B.C. Archilochus was worshipped as a hero.[14] A certain Mnesiepes built a *hērōion* ("hero-shrine") and set up an altar on which he offered sacrifices to the Muses, Apollo Leader of the Muses, and Mnemosyne, along with other gods (Catalogue II 2 Clay = T4 Tarditi). Mnesiepes' name ("recollector of epic poetry") suggests that by profession he was a rhapsode.[15] In his inscription he says that the god Apollo told him through his oracle to honor Archilochus the poet: "After I received this oracle from Apollo, I called this place the Archilocheion and offered sac-

rifices both to the gods and to Archilochus and to honor him, as the god had instructed me to do" (E_1 II 16–19 Clay).[16]

In the *hērōion* Mnesiepes put up a long inscription with a biography of Archilochus, fragments of which survive. He begins at the time when Archilochus discovered that he was a poet. But like Alcidamas, who prefaces his account of Homer's death with "as they say," Mnesiepes distances himself from his sources: "Concerning the information that we wanted to have inscribed, this is what was passed down to us by the ancients and which we have worked on ourselves. For they say . . . " (E_1 II 20–22 Clay). Then he starts his narrative:

> For they say that when Archilochus was still a young boy he was sent by his father Telesicles to the country, to the district called Meadows, in order to bring back a cow to market. He got up early in the night, with the moon shining, to bring the cow to the city. But when he came to the place called Slippery Rocks, he thought he saw a crowd of women. He assumed that they were leaving the fields and going to the town and he approached them and made fun of them. But they welcomed him playfully and with humor, and asked him if he were taking the cow in order to sell it. And when he said yes, they said that they would give him a good price. As soon as the words were spoken neither they nor the cow were visible, but before his feet he saw a lyre, and he was terrified. Sometime later, when he had recovered his senses, he realized that the women who appeared were the Muses and that they had made him a gift of the lyre. He took the lyre and went to the town and showed his father what had happened. (E_1 II 22–39 Clay)

In the story Archilochus appears to be both innocent and ignorant. He has no idea that he was destined to be a poet, and it takes him some time to realize that he has just experienced a theophany. Hesiod, at least in retrospect, did not doubt that he had seen and heard the Muses of Helicon, and he understood why they had handed him a laurel branch and that they had breathed into him a divine voice (*Theog.* 26–34). He did not need to ask anyone else to explain who they were and what their gift to him might mean.[17] But Archilochus' father Telesicles at first did not believe what his son told him. According to Mnesiepes, he had a search made for the missing cow, and when it could not be found, the city sent him and Lycambes to Delphi to ask the oracle. He received an answer (in verse) that whichever of his children greeted him first on his return would be "immortal and famous in song" (231 PW).[18] Telesicles returned late in the day during the festival of Artemisia and was met by Archilochus. Apparently without acknowledging the significance of the en-

counter, Telesicles asked his son if there was enough to eat in the house because it was late in the day (fr. 299 W).

The inscription breaks off at that point, so we have no record of Archilochus' response. But even without knowing whether or not Telesicles recognized that his son had encountered the Muses, we are probably justified in supposing that the source of Mnesiepes' narrative was a comic poem by Archilochus himself.[19] The story was represented in an Athenian white-figure vase-painting ca. 460–450 B.C.[20] The poem might have described how Archilochus received his divine inspiration and had trouble persuading his father that he had made a good bargain when he exchanged the cow for a lyre. It is characteristic of Archilochus that what in an epic account might be a grand mission, with a dramatic revelation, here is placed into a mundane setting, with the protagonist of the story taking a cow to market and realizing only slowly just who the nine jolly women might be. His father also fails to understand the significance of the oracle he received. He is more concerned with eating dinner than in celebrating his son's recognition by the god.[21] Archilochus is a poet who defies convention, who boasts that he abandoned his shield and who approves of little generals.

But even though he relates the story in a matter-of-fact way, Mnesiepes has shaped his narrative in order to do honor to the poet. He stresses that the gods recognized Archilochus' talent early in his life, not only once, but twice. In the next section of the inscription Mnesiepes provides yet another instance of divine recognition. The text is fragmentary, but it appears that when Archilochus introduced a new cult of Dionysus *Oipholios* ("Fucker") in Paros, some citizens believed that they had been insulted by words that were "too iambic" (i.e., slanderous). But after they raised these objections, their sexual organs were affected (E_1 III 35–44 Clay). When the Parian men sent a delegation to Apollo's oracle at Delphi, the god replied that they should honor Archilochus (E_1 III 47–50 Clay).[22] Again it seems likely that the story is based on one of Archilochus' poems.[23] Certainly the narrative pattern behind the story is mythological. We might compare it to how Dionysus punished the women of Thebes with madness because they refused to accept his cult (Eur., *Bacch.* 26–28), or how the women on the island of Lemnos were punished by Aphrodite for neglecting her cult, not with infertility but with such a foul odor that their husbands would not come near them (schol. Ap. Rhod., *Argon.* 1.609).[24] The story might have been inspired by a threatening narrative in one of Archilochus' poems, such as "on them Zeus sent a cruel dryness" (fr. 230 W).[25]

Mnesiepes also uses quotations from Archilochus' poetry to demonstrate

that Archilochus was brave (E_2 I 1 Clay). Presumably here he is seeking to counter the view that Archilochus was cowardly because he said that he abandoned his shield. The rest of Mnesiepes' inscription is lost, but another inscription in the *hērōion* provides some of the missing information about Archilochus' military career and the circumstances of his death. This second inscription was put up in the early first century B.C. by Sosthenes, the son of Prosthenes, a member of a prominent Parian family (Catalogue II 3 Clay = T 5 Tarditi). Sosthenes states his purpose in an epigram at the close of his inscription, where he represents Archilochus as saying: "Sostheus (i.e., Sosthenes), son of Prosthenes honored my highly praised song and gave me the legacy of eternal praise" (B, col. VII, 16–17 Clay). Like the Mnesiepes inscription, Sosthenes' narrative is intended to provide evidence of Archilochus' "piety and [zeal] for his fatherland" (A 1, 3–4 Clay).[26]

Sosthenes claims that his narrative is based on the work of Demeas, who recorded "what Archilochus did and wrote year by year" (A 1, 7–9 Clay = *FGrHist* 502 F 1 = fr. 192, I 74 W), whether in the form of a biography or within the context of a general chronicle about Paros is not known.[27] Nonetheless, the form of Sosthenes' narrative, quotations from poetry with prose glosses, also resembles the biographies of Homer by Alcidamas and Pseudo-Herodotus. Throughout, his main source material appears to be Archilochus' verse, which he either summarizes or cites directly. Sosthenes tells the story of how Coeranus was rescued by a dolphin, citing Archilochus: "as the poet wrote, putting a memorial of him in verse as follows, 'Of fifty men Coeranus . . . Poseidon Hippios'" (A I 18–20 Clay = fr. 192 W). He talks about how the Parians got their gold back from the Thracians and notes, "the poet clearly states this in verses . . ." (A I 43 Clay = fr. 93a W). Sosthenes continues: "After this Amphitimus became archon, and in these lines the poet states clearly that they conquered the Naxians as decisively, in verses as follows, 'in their battle Athena stood propitiously, daughter of Zeus Thunderer, and roused the courage of the mournful populace . . .'" (A I 48–60 Clay = fr. 194 W). In his narrative of these events Sosthenes quotes Archilochus' verses to confirm that "Demeas is speaking the truth" (*alēthē legei*, A IVa, 40), as if some people might be prepared otherwise to doubt it.

In the only surviving section of the inscription that is not directly connected to Archilochus' own words, Sosthenes describes how, during a sea battle, the poet was fatally wounded and his body brought back to Paros: "After that [the Parians] buried him with great honors and made much of what they knew he had done; they were not angry if at an earlier time he had spoken ill

of the city in his poetry" (C I 12–17 Clay). Since the texts of the two inscriptions in the *hērēion* are not complete, we do not know whether or not they included accounts of the last statement by the oracle on behalf of the poet. The second-century B.C. biographer Heraclides Lembus knew the story (T 73 Tarditi = *Pol.* 25 Dilts), but the full version is preserved only in the *Suda* (Alpha 4112 = T 170 Tarditi = Catalogue I 3 Clay), as an example of how the gods do not forget significant mortals. At first the oracle told Calondas, known as Corax ("Raven"), to leave the temple of Apollo because he had killed Archilochus. But when Calondas mentioned the fortunes of war and asked not to be placed under a curse, the god took pity on him and told him (141 PW) to go to Taenarum, where the hero Tettix ("Cicada") was buried and to give offerings to the soul of Telesicles' son (i.e., Archilochus).[28] The author of Archilochus' *Suda* biography does not explain why Calondas was not instead sent to Paros, where Archilochus was buried.[29] The connection may be that in a lost poem Archilochus referred to himself as a cicada (fr. 223 W). The poem might have contained a reference to a fable about a raven and a cicada, in which the raven goes to the entrance to the Underworld at Taenarum.[30] The raven is Apollo's bird and cicadas were considered sacred to the Muses. The narrative pattern of this episode is similar to the story about the oracle given to the men of Paros who initially refused to accept the cult of Dionysus.[31] Even in this late narrative, the gods play a role in the death of the poet.[32]

Plutarch considered the tale of Coeranus' rescue by the dolphin mentioned by Sosthenes to be "mythical" (*mythodēs*, *Mor.* 985a). But later biographers treated other narratives in his poetry as if they had been historical, particularly if they included no reference to divine intervention or miraculous events. Later tradition accused Archilochus of causing the daughters of Lycambes to hang themselves: Lycambes had promised to marry his daughter Neoboule to Archilochus and then broke his oath, with the result that the poet attacked him savagely in iambic verse. The source of this story again appears to be one of Archilochus' poems, a few phrases of which are preserved on a fragmentary papyrus that mentions "daughters of [Lyca]mbes . . . iambics . . . we attached our necks" (*PDublin.* Inv. 193a = T 19 Gerber). But it is possible that, in the original poem, Archilochus was depicting imaginary events. The name Lycambes, "Wolf-Walker," a name from fable rather than reality, is in itself an indication that at least some elements of the narrative of his quarrel with Archilochus may be fictional.[33] Lycambes may have been a poetic rival whom Archilochus was prepared to disparage in exaggerated terms.[34] On the basis of the surviving fragments of Archilochus' poems (fr. 30–87, 172–97 W), we

have no way of knowing whether or not Lycambes' daughters actually hanged themselves.[35] Biographers also accused the poet Hipponax of causing deaths with his iambics, the deaths of the sculptors Bupalos and Athenis (schol. Hor., *Epod.* 6.11–14).[36] In Rome at least the story of Lycambes' daughters became emblematic of the power of Archilochus' satire.[37]

Whether or not in reality Archilochus' poetry was as destructive as his ancient biographers claimed, the citizens of Paros honored Archilochus as a hero for hundreds of years after his death. Even so, it is significant that what interested the two men who put up these expensive inscriptions in his *hērōion*, as well as the visitors who read them, was not so much Archilochus' poetry as his life, as reconstructed in stone by the two biographers.[38]

It is more difficult to get a clear impression of the personality of the poet Stesichorus (ca. mid-seventh to mid-sixth century B.C.).[39] Such fragments of Stesichorus' poetry that survive help us to understand why so little information about his life has come down to us. The papyrus fragments of his poetry do not contain the first-person statements from which significant portions of Hesiod's and Archilochus' biographies are derived.[40] Thus, many "facts" about Stesichorus' life are as uncertain as Homer's (*Suda*, Sigma 1095 = *PMGF* TA 19). His father was Euphemus or Euclides or Hyetes or even Hesiod; the multiple choices offered indicate that biographers had no certain information but found likely names in his poetry or sought to connect him to his literary ancestors. He was said to have been born in Himera in Sicily or Mataura in Italy.[41] Other sources said he came as an exile from Palantion in Arcadia to Catana in Sicily, where he died and was buried far from his birthplace, like Homer, Aeschylus, and Euripides.[42]

He was originally called Tisias ("Avenger"), but like Homer, he acquired a second, descriptive name, Stesichorus, "because he first set up choruses for singing to the lyre" (*kitharōidiai choron estēsen*). This aetiology was understood to mean that his songs were sung by choruses.[43] But the "setting up" may only imply that he organized dances to accompany his own singing, since it is clear from the surviving fragments that his poetic narratives were longer than what was customary in later choral performance (e.g., *SLG* schol. 1 i, 15).[44] In later tradition the similarities between Homer and Stesichorus appeared strong enough to suggest that Stesichorus was Homer's reincarnation (Antipater Thess., 74 *GP*).[45] It is also possible that Stesichorus may have been a nondescriptive proper name, like Stesilaus or Stesandrus or Stesimbrotus.

Homer asked the Muse to tell him the names of all who came to fight at

Troy, because he could not do so without her aid (*Il.* 2.484–90). But at the beginning of Stesichorus' poem *Oresteia*, the poet speaks of the Muse as his *collaborator*, asking her to commemorate with him not the wars but the marriages of gods and men (*PMGF* 210). Another passage in which Stesichorus broke with Homeric tradition became the source of a famous anecdote. Stesichorus had mentioned Helen and her sisters' infidelities in at least one poem (*PMGF* 223), but in another poem he apologized for what he had said: "This story is not true; you [Helen] never went in the well-benched ships, you never came to the citadel of Troy" (*PMGF* 192).[46] In the new version of Helen's story, only her phantom (*eidōlon*) left for Troy with Paris, and it had been over this phantom (most ironically) that so many men had died at Troy.[47]

In its original context, Stesichorus' retraction or palinode may primarily have been intended to call attention to the poet's virtuosity, by showing that he could tell more than one version of a story.[48] The fourth-century biographer Chamaeleon (fr. 28–29 Wehrli) says that Stesichorus criticized Homer in one palinode for putting Helen and not her phantom in Troy, and criticized Hesiod in another palinode (*PMGF* 193). Chamaeleon does not say why Stesichorus "blamed" Hesiod, but in the *Catalogue of Women* Hesiod had said that Helen had "disgraced Menelaus' bed" (fr. 176, cf. 196 M–W).[49] Plato has Socrates provide a more dramatic explanation for the palinode. Socrates quotes Stesichorus' lines in the *Phaedrus* (243a–b), saying that he needs to purify himself before speaking of the gods, as Stesichorus did but Homer failed to do. Stesichorus had lost his sight because he had slandered Helen, but unlike Homer he recognized his mistake, wrote the palinode, and regained his vision. It is not clear from Plato's account or from later versions of the story exactly how Stesichorus became blind.[50] We do not know whether Stesichorus himself described in a poem how he became blind or if the story was invented later to explain why he states so emphatically that he was wrong to say that Helen had gone to Troy. Did he write about how Helen, who was worshipped as a goddess in Sparta, appeared to him in a dream, and he was blinded by the vision?[51] Or was the story of his blindness modeled on the analogy of what Homer says happened to the bard Thamyris, who became blind because he had offended the Muses (*Il.* 2.594–600)?[52] It is always a mistake to offend a goddess. In fact, any contact with the gods is dangerous for a mortal: for example, even though the Muses loved the bard Demodocus, they gave him blindness along with the gift of sweet song (*Od.* 8.63–64). Knowledge often accompanied blindness in ancient myth, as in the cases of Oedipus and of the prophet Tiresias.[53]

Like Archilochus, Stesichorus is said to have been honored by his fellow

citizens. According to the *Suda* his tomb was substantial and he had a gate named after him at Catana (Sigma 1085).[54] It is probable that somewhere in his poetry Stesichorus (like Alcaeus) expressed disapproval of tyrants. Aristotle summarizes a fable Stesichorus is said to have told as a warning to the citizens about providing bodyguards for Phalaris, the tyrant of Acragas ca. 571–555 B.C.: A horse let his master put a bridle on him and ride on his back, thus gaining protection against his enemies but at the same time losing his freedom (*Rhet.* 2.1393 = *PMGF* TA 8).[55] In the fifth century, Phalaris had become legendary for his cruelty and was said to have roasted his enemies in a bronze bull (Pindar, *Pythian* 1.95–98).[56] Evidently the notion of a conflict between a tyrant and a poet appealed to the imagination of later biographers, because someone in late antiquity composed a collection of letters which he attributed to the tyrant Phalaris. Some letters refer in general terms to Stesichorus' hostility but represent the tyrant as capable of forbearance in his attitude toward the poet and his family, like a Roman provincial administrator trying to keep the peace.[57] Here again, as in the case of Archilochus, the biographical tradition about Stesichorus became more enduring than his actual verses, and the corpus of fake letters of Phalaris vastly outnumber the surviving fragments of Stesichorus' own poetry.

Because poets did not always talk about their own lives in public performance, historians have a hard time finding even the most basic information about their origins and background. Two poets from Sparta present special problems. Aristotle (or one of his sources) appears to have deduced that the poet Alcman (second half of the seventh century) came from Lydia, on the basis of some lines from one of his maiden songs (*PMGF* TA 1A = *POxy* 2389 F 9), a deduction that was widely believed in antiquity (e.g., *POxy* 2506 fr. 5 col. 1 [b] 3–5). Presumably Aristotle understood the verses in question as a first-person statement: "I was (*ēs*) not a country fellow or clumsy [lit., left-handed] or a Thessalian by birth, nor an Erysichaean shepherd, but from lofty Sardis" (*PMGF* 16). The context of the quotation is lost, but since *ēs* in Alcman's dialect is usually third-person singular, the sophisticated Lydian could not be Alcman speaking about himself. Rather, a maiden chorus is praising a musician or someone assisting at the performance: Sardis was famous for its culture and prosperity.[58] The idea that Alcman came from Lydia may have appealed to Aristotle (or his sources) because there had been no Spartan poetry or art since the sixth century. Other ancient scholars understood that the dialect and ambience of the poems was clearly Spartan.[59] In the third century, another tradi-

tion was invented to reconcile the two accounts of Alcman's origin (*PMGF* TA 3 = *POxy* 3542): Alcman was brought as a boy from Lydia to Sparta.[60]

Apparently the idea of a native Spartan poet seemed incredible to fourth-century Athenians familiar with the military regime of fifth-century Sparta. The poets Terpander of Lesbos and Thaletas of Gortyn were said to have been brought to Sparta in the seventh century by command of the oracle, again because of civic need (223–24 PW). Plato claimed that even Tyrtaeus, possibly the best-known Spartan poet, was an Athenian (T 2–3 Gerber).[61] According to later commentators, the seventh-century poet Tyrtaeus had been a lowly schoolmaster in Athens, not particularly skilled in verse, and lame; nonetheless, the oracle at Delphi told the Spartans to summon him (297, 299 PW).[62] Thus, even though Sparta was the greatest military power in Greece, Athenians supposed that her most important cultural legacy, the elegies of Tyrtaeus, was the result of *Athenian* talent and training.[63] Presumably, the notion that Tyrtaeus came from Miletus in Asia Minor (*Suda*, Sigma 1205) was also invented to explain why Tyrtaeus did not write his verses in Spartan dialect.

Since the first-person statements in Tyrtaeus' poems are hortatory, they provide no information about as him as an individual, or indeed as a poet. But biographers surmised that he was an adviser or even a general (T 3, 10 Gerber) during the war between the Spartans and Messenians that he mentions in his poetry (fr. 5–6 W), because the speaker's stance suggests authority and his subject matter has a distinctly military character.[64] Biographers inferred from his poem, later known as "Law and Order" (*Eunomia*, fr. 1–4 W), that (as the *Suda* records) he wrote a constitution for the Spartans. In the surviving verses of that poem, he asks only that the people obey their leaders and that due honor be given to the gods, and he advocates that restraint be shown in the distribution of land.[65] The idea that Tyrtaeus was writing about the Spartan constitution may have arisen from his use of the word *rhetrai* (fr. 4.6 W), which in context means "agreements" but which later biographers interpreted as a reference to the Spartan constitutional law known as the Great Rhetra. The fourth-century historian Philochorus says that Tyrtaeus' elegies were sung in battle and at symposia in Sparta (T 10 Gerber = *FGrHist* 328 F 16).[66] By the Hellenistic age, the Spartan ethic had come to represent the struggle for Greek independence from Macedonia. A third-century epitaph in Acarnania in northwest Greece says that the dead man "did not conceal his education, but observed the Spartan saying of Tyrtaeus and chose virtue before life" (T 9 Gerber, cf. fr. 10.1–2 W).[67]

The *Suda* biography of the mid-to-late-seventh-century poet Ibycus gives only a limited idea of the scope of his subject matter. He is said to have been "particularly in love with youths" (*Suda*, Iota 80 = *PMGF* TA 1). The story of his death shows that the gods wished to honor him, as they had Homer, Hesiod, and Archilochus. When he was captured and about to be killed by pirates, Ibycus predicted that cranes would avenge him. Later, when one of the pirates called some cranes flying overhead "the avengers of Ibycus" and was apprehended by bystanders; the adage "the cranes of Ibycus" derived from that story.[68] An anecdote about the poet Arion suggests that poetry was a profit-making business, because both he and Ibycus were kidnapped by pirates. After taking his money, the pirates made the poet Arion jump into the sea, but he was rescued and brought ashore by a dolphin and so was able to identify his assailants (Hdt. 1.23).[69] The idea of the avenging cranes, like the story of the dolphins that brought Hesiod's body ashore, may have been inspired by a passage in Ibycus' poetry.[70]

During the last half of the seventh century, Alcaeus of Lesbos wrote poetry on many different topics, including the Trojan War (42, 283 Voigt), and the pleasures of wine (50, 333, 346, 347). The setting for his recitation was more likely to have been the symposium (e.g., fr. 70, 332 V) than a public space like the agora,[71] but his biographers emphasize his involvement in civic affairs, much as Sosthenes in his inscription about Archilochus cites verses to document that poet's role in the battle between the Parians and the Thracians.[72] In many poems, Alcaeus attacks his political enemies Pittacus and Myrsilus (e.g., fr. 70, 112, 129, 348 V); he speaks bitterly about having to go into exile (130b V). Aristotle, in the lost third book of the *Poetics* (fr. 75 Rose) spoke of Alcaeus quarreling with Pittacus (Alcaeus, fr. 471 V). In the *Politics* he says the tyrants beat the people of Mytilene with clubs (ii 3b 26 = Alcaeus fr. 472 V), and he cites Alcaeus as evidence (1285a 33 = Alcaeus fr. 34.8; fr. 470 V) that the Mytileneans made Pittacus their tyrant.[73] Strabo (13.1.38) tells us that in the Augustan age Alcaeus' poems about the tyrants were known specifically as his "revolutionary poems" (*stasiōtika poiēmata*, fr. 468 V).[74]

Although Sappho of Lesbos appears to have been a contemporary of Alcaeus, politics and conflict are missing entirely from her biographies.[75] Instead, we find fuller details about members of her family, friends, and pupils than about those of any other archaic poet. This phenomenon suggests that in her poetry the first-person speaker(s) referred to people by name more often than the

first-person speakers in Alcaeus' or Ibycus' or even Archilochus' poetry. But again, biographers appear to have relied on inference as a means of identifying relatives. The longer of her two *Suda* biographies (Sigma 107 = fr. 253 V) offers seven possible names for her father. The narrative of her life in the several surviving biographies does not describe her poetic talent but emphasizes her conformity (or nonconformity) to expected patterns of female behavior. There is no reference in surviving biographies (fr. 252–53 V) of her going into exile in Sicily, as recorded by the chronicler of the Parian marble (fr. 251 V = *FGrHist* 239 F 36), which suggests that she or her family were involved in some of the political conflicts described by Alcaeus in his poetry. Were it not that a fragment of her long narrative poem about Hector and Andromache (fr. 44 V) survives, one might suppose, on the basis of her biographies, that her poetry was primarily concerned with her relationships to her family and her love for women.

Her biographers deduced from her frequent references to young women in her poetry that she had pupils and therefore a school—according to one commentary, of the noblest girls from Ionia as well as from Lesbos (*SLG* 261A.1.7–11).[76] This information may also derive from inference. The longer *Suda* biography mentions the names of her companions (*hetairai*) and pupils (*mathētriai*); several of these appear in her surviving poetry. Perhaps also in some lost poem she referred to herself as their leader, as the chorus in Alcman's *partheneion* speaks of their trainer, Aenesimbrota (*PMGF* 1.73). Like Ibycus and Anacreon she is alleged to have indulged in the homosexual love that she describes in her poetry, behavior that in later antiquity was regarded as deviant. According to a papyrus biography dating from the early centuries A.D. (*POxy* 1800 fr. 1), she was "unconventional and a lover of women" (fr. 252 V); according to the longer *Suda* biography, "she acquired a bad reputation because of her disgusting friendships" (fr. 252, cf. 262 V). Some information about her sexuality must have come from comic poetry. According to her longer *Suda* biography, she married a very rich man called Cercylas ("Little Prick," fr. 253 V). The description of her appearance in a papyrus biography also may come from comedy, given its emphasis on her hideous appearance, short stature, and dark complexion, all of which would have been considered off-putting to men.

Love affairs are an important theme in her biographies. The papyrus biography that describes her as "unconventional and a lover of women" (fr. 252 V) relates that her brother Charaxus spent a large amount of money on Doricha,

a courtesan in Egypt; Sappho appears to speak disapprovingly of this relationship in her poetry (fr. 15 V). The fifth-century historian Herodotus knew the poems in which Sappho criticized her brother and assumed that the woman he was involved with was the courtesan known as Rhodopis ("Rosy-face") and that, after buying her freedom, Charaxus brought her back with him to Lesbos (2.134–35). This love affair was remembered in later times. There was a monument to Rhodopis in the Greek trading post Naucratis in Egypt (*Suda*, Rho 211), which inspired the third-century B.C. poet Posidippus of Pella to write an epigram describing their love affair (17 Gow–Page).[77]

Then there is the story that Sappho killed herself because of unrequited love. According to her shorter *Suda* biography (Sigma 108), she threw herself into the sea from the cliff at Leucates because of her love for Phaon of Mytilene. The narrative is based on a myth: Because Phaon of Mytilene, a ferryman, had treated Aphrodite kindly when she appeared disguised as an old woman, the goddess gave him an unguent that made him irresistible to women (Aelian, *VH* 12.18).[78] His story was the subject of several fourth-century comedies, such as the comic poet Plato's *Phaon*.[79] The fourth-century comic poet Menander in his comedy *Leucadia* has a character mention how Sappho "hunting the arrogant Phaon, in maddened passion threw herself from the cliff that could be seen from afar," which was near a sanctuary in Leucas (fr. 211 V = Menander, fr. 258 Koerte). The "Leucas rock" was known as a lover's leap in Sappho's day: a male speaker in a poem by Anacreon speaks of planning to dive into the sea from the Leucas rock when drunk with love (*PMG* 376).[80] Sappho could easily have been brought into the Phaon narrative, because she came from Mytilene and wrote lyrics in which the female speakers lament the death of Adonis, another beautiful young man (e.g., esp. fr. 140, cf. 168 V).[81] Approximately six comedies named *Sappho* were produced in Athens; Diphilus' version portrayed the poets Alcaeus and Anacreon as unlikely contenders for her affection (fr. 71 KA, *PMG* V p. 94).[82] The story of her passion for Phaon is suited to comedy because in it her behavior is completely out of character: the ugly Sappho pursues a beautiful man instead of a young woman, and (even more absurdly) kills herself on the island of Leucas off the west coast of mainland Greece, improbably far from her homeland off the west coast of Asia Minor. In her poetry she sometimes appears to be describing herself as an old woman (e.g., 21, 24a, 121 V).[83] But the more dramatic story of her dying for love before old age would have appealed to biographers, who in general seem to have preferred that their subjects die dramatic and even demeaning deaths. Similarly,

Homer, the teacher of all Greeks, who could not answer the children's riddle and slipped in the mud and died, or the righteous Hesiod, who was accused of rape and murdered by the brothers of his supposed victim.

Alcidamas included Sappho among the poets who were awarded civic honors after their deaths, even though she was a woman (Alcidamas fr. 3 Muir = Ar. *Rhet.* 1398b = Catalogue I 1 Clay). In Roman times there were statues of her and portraits of her on coins.[84] But there is no evidence that the citizens of Mytilene honored her with the kind of hero cult that the citizens of Paros maintained for Archilochus or the elaborate monument that the citizens of Catana dedicated to Stesichorus.

Like Sappho, Anacreon (born ca. 575 B.C.) was characterized by biographers primarily as a love poet. His *Suda* biography (Alpha 1916) states that the poet's "life was devoted to love affairs with boys and women and with song." But he also wrote on other topics, including war and exile (*PMG* 504), such as the revolution which compelled him to leave his native Teos in Asia Minor and settle in Abdera in Thrace (*PMG* 505).[85] He mentioned Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, in his poetry (e.g., *PMG* 483), and Herodotus says that Anacreon was with Polycrates when that tyrant was assassinated in 522 B.C. (3.121).[86] As so often, biographers seem to have had no certain information about Anacreon's parentage, listing his father as Skythinus, Eumelus, Parthenius or Aristocratus.

Towards the end of his lifetime, Anacreon was portrayed on a red-figured Athenian vase (Copenhagen MN 133365) wearing a woman's headdress while singing.[87] Aristophanes in the *Thesmophoriazusae* talks about Anacreon's dancing in an effeminate way, again with a woman's headdress (163), so that his manners would match his poetry (50).[88] Critias called Anacreon "sweet weaver of womanish song, rouser of symposia, rival of *auloi*, lover of the lyre" (88B 1 DK = *PMG* 500). He was said to have died by choking on a grape-pit (Val. Max. 9.8), a suitable death for a devotee of Dionysus.[89] It was as a drunken old man in love, and not as a patriot, that Anacreon was remembered in the Hellenistic era and later antiquity, in the popular drinking songs known as Anacreontics.[90]

Anacreon's biography is emblematic of the lives of the other archaic poets discussed in this chapter. Even though the whole corpus of his poetry was available to biographers, within only a short time after his death Anacreon's life became more of a caricature than a character study. Archilochus, Tyrtaeus, Alcaeus, and even Stesichorus are remembered as soldiers, Sappho and

Anacreon as love poets and lovers. Aristotle knew of a poetic dialogue (*Rhet*. 1367e 7) in which Alcaeus says to Sappho, "I want to say something but shame prevents me"; she then reproves him for his improper attentions (Sappho, fr. 137 V).[91] Although the dialogue may contain some original verses, the idea of Alcaeus' making some sort of sexual proposition to Sappho more probably comes from a comedy, like Diphilus' *Phaon*. By the Hellenistic age the story of Alcaeus and Anacreon vying for Sappho had taken on a life of its own: in his catalogue of lonely lovers Hermesianax included Alcaeus and Anacreon, each pining away for Sappho (fr. 7.47–56 Powell).[92] Later poets and artists gave these poets distinctive new lives that may have been inspired by but, as time went on, were increasingly independent of their actual poetry.

Solon

The principal sources for most of the Lives of poets discussed in the previous chapter were brief entries in the *Suda*. We have much more information about Solon of Athens (archon in 594/3 B.C.), almost certainly because Athenians in the fifth century and after regarded him as the founding father of Athenian democracy. There is a brief account of Solon's political achievements in Aristotle's *Constitution of Athens* (*Ath. Pol.*). Like Archilochus' biographers, Demeas and Sosthenes, Aristotle suggests that his primary source material was Solon's own verses: "That this is the way it happened, all the other writers agree and Solon himself records these events in the following verses" (12.1). He then proceeds to quote excerpts from several different poems in verification of his earlier discussion (fr. 4, 5, 7, 8, 29b GPr = 4a, 4b, 4c, 5, 6, 34 W). If in the *Ath. Pol.* Aristotle had not cited Solon's actual verses, it might seem as if he were depending on an independent source, since only a few verbal parallels survive in his text (fr. 7 GPr = W, *demōi edoka dynamin;* cf. T 56 GPr, *apodidonai tōi demōi dynamin*). Twice he summarizes what Solon says (T 64, 65 GPr), a method that he also uses in the *Politics* (T 56 GPr), where he reviews what Solon said about the moderation with which he treated the common people, though without quoting specifically from his poetry (fr. 7 GPr = 5W; cf. also T 58 GPr).

Aristotle in the *Ath. Pol.* does not name any of his other sources, but they almost certainly included works by fourth-century writers of special histories of Athens, or *Atthides*. In passages where he does not cite Solon directly, he was probably relying on a source like Cleidemus' *Atthis*, which itself was based

on Solon's work and legends about him. But, like Herodotus, Cleidemus would have distinguished between myth and history only in terms of plausibility (*eikos*).[1] Aristotle's methodology in the *Ath. Pol.* serves as a guide to the ways in which other fourth-century historians worked with their sources. Solon said he removed "fixed boundaries" (fr. 30.6 GPr = 36 W) and so made the earth "free"; he brought back to Athens men who had been sold into slavery at home and abroad because of their poverty. Aristotle apparently assumed that those lines specifically to refer to legislation known as the *Seisachtheia* ("Release from Debt").[2] But Plutarch tells us that several writers, including the fourth-century atthidographer Androtion, claimed that Solon only reduced the interest payments (*Vit. Sol.* 15.4).[3] Such uncertainty about the interpretation of these lines indicates that in the fourth century biographers did not have external evidence to guide them.

As I shall try to argue in this chapter, the principal, if not the only, source material on which all Solon's biographers drew was his own poetry and inferences based on it.[4] When discussing the sources for Solon's life, I shall not make any distinction between biographers and historians, because fourth-century biographers thought of themselves as historians (*historikoi*) and sought to emulate them, as we saw in the biography of Homer written by the orator Alcidamas in the late fifth century (fr. 27 Muir). Certainly Aristotle, Ephorus, and Alcidamas could be called historians in the sense that they conducted investigations, tried to make sense of their data, and (so far as they could) sought to place events into an appropriate historical context. Like Herodotus and Thucydides, they had ethical goals, which they sometimes made explicit. Biographers determine how they want their subjects to be remembered and give their narratives a particular focus. As we have seen, Mnesiepes and Sosthenes described Archilochus as a patriot and fighter. Biographers described Alcaeus as a revolutionary, and Tyrtaeus as a general. Biographers present Solon primarily as a statesman, emphasizing his role in politics, even though surviving fragments indicate that his poetry dealt with a variety of topics: ethics (fr. 1 GPr = 13 W), politics (fr. 4, 5, 7 GPr = 4a, 4, 5 W), the ages of man (fr. 23 GPr = 27 W), and sex (fr. 16 GPr = 25 W). We can also see that, like Archilochus' biographers Mnesiepes and Sosthenes, Aristotle and Plutarch use quotations from Solon's poetry to "verify" their accounts of his achievements. It is possible to see the process in action by looking at two cases in which later writers made mistaken inferences from his poetry, and as a result invented historical incidents. Solon wrote: "I have come as a herald from lovely Salamis, placing an ornament of verse, a song instead of a (prose) speech" (*ant' agorēs,* fr. 2

GPr = I W). In the fourth century, Solon's *ant' agorēs* was understood as "before the marketplace," because the primary meaning of *agora* had become the setting for the speech rather than the speech itself.[5] On the basis of this misinterpretation, the citizens of the island of Salamis set up a statue of Solon in their marketplace (*agora*), commemorating Solon's presence there (T 35, 36 GPr). The phrase "placing an ornament of words" also became difficult to interpret. Solon meant that he had written a poem,[6] but Diogenes Laertius (or his source) says that Solon hired a herald to read the poem; Plutarch supposed that he recited the lines "from memory" himself.[7] Biographers used quotations from Solon's poetry to document their portraits of Solon as lawgiver, emphasizing his moderation and superiority to other men. In some cases, the poetry they cite seems not to bear very close relation to the description it is meant to support. Proof of Solon's impartial personal ethics is provided by an epigram (fr. 18 GPr = 24 W), the substance of which is so general in nature that the same lines were also attributed to sixth-century poet Theognis (719–28). With the advantage of hindsight, biographers interpreted as a prediction of Pisistratus' tyranny Solon's epigram comparing the danger of great men to a thundercloud (fr. 12 GPr = 9 W). In retrospect some deduced from Solon's use of the metaphor of a "great shield" (fr. 7.6 GPr = 5 W, fr. 31.8–9 GPr = 37 W) that Solon served as a general in the Athenian campaign against Megara (*Vit. Sol.* 9).[8] The assumption was similar to that made by fourth-century biographers who thought that the authoritative stance of the speaker in Tyrtaeus' poems meant that the poet had served as a Spartan general. When Solon says that he kept his hands off violence and tyranny (fr. 32 GPr = 29 W) and pretends that people thought him a fool to have refused the opportunity to be tyrant (fr. 29 GPr = 33 W), commentators took him literally (*Vit. Sol.* 14 = T 59 GPr).[9]

Clearly, the biographers' estimate of Solon's importance came first of all from Solon himself: "If a man other than I had taken the goad, an envious or greedy man, he would not have held back the people" (fr. 30.20–22 GPr = 36 W). He vividly portrays his isolation: "By defending myself on all sides, I turned round like a wolf among dogs" (fr. 30.26–27 GPr = 36 W). Other archaic poets adopt a similar rhetorical stance, emphasizing their isolation from others. For example, Pindar's "I" speaks of running "as an enemy like a wolf" (*Pyth.* 2.84).[10] Solon portrays himself as surrounded by detractors: "Solon is not a thinker or a counselor; the god offered him good things but he did not take them" (fr. 29 GPr = 33 W). Use of dialogue vividly creates an atmosphere of dissent;[11] by calling on friends to witness wrongs and by insulting his enemies, Alcaeus makes his listeners feel the immediacy of the political events he

describes (e.g., fr. 129, 130, 348 V). Although Alcaeus' lyrics seem to have been written for performance in symposia, some of Solon's poems are written in trochaic tetrameter and iambic trimeter, the standard recitative meters used in Athenian drama (Ar., *Poet.* 4.1449a 21).[12] Were these poems composed for recitation at a public performance? It was not long after this time that Thespis was said to have staged the first dramatic performances in Athens.

Politicians did not hesitate to use political stunts. Herodotus tells the story of Pisistratus' getting himself restored as tyrant of Athens by having a woman dress as Athena and accompany him in his chariot (1.60.4–5).[13] In later tradition Solon also was a performer. Aristotle said that Solon threw off his cloak when he recited his poem about Salamis in the *agora* (fr. 143 Rose). The gesture would have indicated to his audience that he wished to remind them of the scene where Odysseus throws off his cloak to call attention to himself and to persuade a crowd to change its mind (*Il.* 2.183).[14] Demosthenes relates another fourth-century tradition, which had Solon wearing a traveler's felt cap (*pilidion*) when he spoke about Salamis, an item of clothing frequently used in depictions of Odysseus.[15] But according to Diogenes Laertius, Solon wore a garland on his head rather than a felt cap and pretended to be insane when he declaimed his poem about Salamis (1.46), as if he were coming from or speaking to a symposium.[16] Diogenes also says that he ran into the assembly wearing armor to warn them about Pisistratus' tyrannical aspirations (1.49).

But even without the theatrics, it is clear from the surviving fragments that Solon wished to present himself as a ruler beloved by the Muses, like one of the local chiefs (*basileis*) described by Hesiod:[17] "All the people look to him as he decides legal issues with righteous judgments. He delivers his speeches faultlessly and with his knowledge puts a stop even to great quarrels. This is why there are wise kings, because when the people are being harmed by speeches, they easily turn things around, persuading them with gentle words. The people welcome him with kindly respect like a god when he goes into a dispute, and he stands out among the assembly" (*Theog.* 84–92). In an elegiac poem quoted by Demosthenes, Solon speaks of justice and of law and order (*eunomiē*) in language similar to that used by Hesiod in the *Works and Days* (see esp. fr. 3.32, 1.37 GPr = 4.32, 13.7 W).[18] Here again he may be emphasizing his concern with justice and morality in order to contrast himself with political competitors, such as Pisistratus, from whom in practice he may not have differed quite so much as he claims he does.[19] In the absence of information that is not dependent upon Solon's own poetry, we cannot know for sure that his outlook was as democratic as he says it was.

Whatever the reality, posterity took him at his word. His presentation of himself as a wise ruler and lawgiver won him inclusion in later accounts of the history of Athens, such as the *Atthides* and in Aristotle's account of the Athenian constitution. The "Laws of Solon" were inscribed on the *axones* (wooden blocks) or *kyrbeis* (bronze tablets) displayed until 461 on the Acropolis and thereafter in the Agora.[20] In 409 B.C., sections were published on stone.[21] As time went on, the wording of the legislation was modernized. Some of the laws attributed to Solon clearly date from later periods, but attaching his name to them gave these laws an authority they would not otherwise have had.[22] A few verbatim quotations from the laws are cited by biographers, but traditions about specific laws apparently derived from copies of the laws themselves, independently of his poetry.[23] Like the civil laws of Gortyn in Crete, the "Laws of Solon" deal with theoretical situations and are expressed in conditional terms.[24] In verses quoted by Plutarch, Solon prays to Zeus that the laws (*thesmoi*) will prosper and become famous (fr. 31 W). Plutarch says that some sources took these lines to mean that he had tried to put the laws into verse (*Vit. Sol.* 3.4),[25] but nothing in Solon's surviving poetry resembles the laws in subject or in style.

Because of this self-presentation, Solon came to be considered one of the Seven Wise Men. Traditions about the Wise Men appear to have been formed in the fifth century.[26] We can get a better sense of the moderation and restraint expressed in Solon's verses if we compare them to some of the sayings of the sixth-century poet Theognis of Megara. Theognis complains about the political changes he is witnessing: "Who can bear looking at this?" (58, 1110); "trample the mindless common people underfoot, strike them with a sharp goad" (847–48). But in Solon's poetry, the "I" says that he favors neither side and claims that he is uninfluenced by selfish motivations: "If a man other than I had taken the goad, an envious or a greedy man, he would not have held back the people" (fr. 30.20–22 GPr = 36 W). In the fifth century he was regarded as a wise advisor. Herodotus has King Croesus of Lydia ask Solon to visit his court, much as the fifth-century tyrant Hieron invited the poets Pindar, Aeschylus, and Bacchylides to come to Syracuse. By the fourth century, stories were told of a meeting which all seven of the Wise Men attended and which historians located at different times and places—at the court of Cypselus of Corinth or Croesus' court in Sardis (Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F 181) or at the Pan-Ionian Festival or at Delphi (Diog. Laert. 1.40). The canon of the seven varies but Solon is always included.[27] The ease with which fourth-century authors could vary both participants and settings suggests that they had no precise

information to draw on. Rather, they regarded the meeting of the Seven Wise Men as a representative occasion, like the contest between Hesiod and Homer or the debate between Aeschylus and Euripides in the lower world portrayed by Aristophanes in the *Frogs*. The symposium of the Wise Men is described in a papyrus fragment that consists of hexameters with prose interludes, like Alcidamas' fourth-century account of the death of Homer.[28] Perhaps this was the standard format for fourth-century and even fifth-century symposium entertainments about the lives of famous men.

The sayings of Solon, as one of the Seven Wise Men reflect in outline the balanced views expressed in his poetry, especially on law and government.[29] It was his role as a Wise Man rather than as a political figure that guaranteed his inclusion in Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*. The apothegm "satisfaction is born from wealth and insolence from satisfaction" (Diog. Laert. 1.59) is a prose abstraction of Solon's verses "satisfaction begets *hybris*, whenever great wealth follows men whose minds are not sound" (fr. 8.3–4 W). But most proverbial wisdom attributed to him as a Wise Man has no direct relation to his surviving poetry, and some is even put by biographers into the mouth of one of the other Wise Men.[30] "Never tell a lie," "Pursue worthy aims," "Make your mind your leader" (Diog. Laert. 1.59). The sayings of the Seven Wise Men emphasize restraint and moderation; according to Plato (*Protag*. 343a) they were the authors of the famous warnings inscribed on the temple of Apollo at Delphi: "Know Thyself" and "Nothing to Excess."[31] Had only the apothegms of Solon survived and none of his poetry, Solon would not seem very different from Thales or Pittacus or Bias.[32]

Plutarch's biography of Solon offers a portrait of the character of Solon, not an historical study in the modern sense of the word.[33] He consulted the writings of previous biographers whose works are now lost, though apparently without realizing that their work, like his, depended largely on Solon's verse.[34] He follows other biographers of poets in backing up his narrative with quotations from the poetry. Like some of Solon's earlier biographers, he seems to have been prepared to quote Solon's lines out of context; for example, he cites a simile comparing the behavior of a crowd to that of the sea (fr. 12 W) as evidence that Solon had a limited understanding of natural causes (*Vit. Sol.* 3.5).[35] Like other biographers, Plutarch quotes oracles that were probably composed long after Solon's death as "evidence" of divine sanction for Solon's views about Salamis (*Vit. Sol.* 9.1 = 326 PW) and the possibility of his becoming tyrant of Athens (*Vit. Sol.* 14.4 = 15 PW).[36] Plutarch accepts the Athenian biographical tradition that portrays Solon as a man of moderation who refused

to permit himself to be made tyrant.[37] He pairs Solon's biography with that of Publicola, who led the Romans in their rebellion against Tarquinius Superbus, the last king of Rome.

Herodotus had said that Solon left Athens after his laws were enacted so that he would not be compelled to repeal them (1.29.1). Plutarch, who used fourth-century sources that retroactively emphasized Solon's fear of tyranny and demagoguery, suggests that he left in order to dissociate himself from his laws.[38] He cites a line from one of Solon's poems in "support" of Solon's decision: "In great undertakings it is hard to please everyone, as he himself says" (fr. 9 GPr = 7 W).[39] This line, like Solon's other references to dissent (e.g., 29b GPr = 34 W), describes a general policy, without the specifics of legislation and timing that his biographers supply. The lawgiver Lycurgus made the Spartans promise that they would not change his laws until he came back, and so never returned. The model for the lawgiver's journey of discovery is, of course, the *Odyssey* (esp. 1.3). Odysseus' journey home from Troy lasted ten years, and, as we have seen, Solon on occasion sought to associate himself with Odysseus the orator and the traveler.[40] Wherever Solon actually went on the journey that he appears to describe in his poetry, later writers clearly embellished and added new meanings to his narrative.

The verses cited by biographers describing Solon's visits to Egypt and to Cyprus during his exile contain no specific reference to his political career or the timing of his journey. Plutarch draws on one of Solon's verses to confirm that Solon lived in Egypt, "at the delta of the Nile near the shore of Canobus" (fr. 10 GPr = 28 W). In visiting Egypt, Solon's purpose, like Lycurgus', was said to have been to learn about their laws. Herodotus, for example, says that Solon modeled his law requiring that every man report his income annually on a law established by Amasis (2.177.2). Curiously, no biographer explains why he should have set out to learn about Egyptian law *after* he established new laws in Athens.[41]

Plutarch adds that Solon learned the story of Atlantis from Egyptian priests and brought it back to Greece in his poetry (*Vit. Sol.* 26.1). Here his principal source is not Solon's poetry but Plato's *Timaeus* (20d–21d). In that dialogue the orator Critias (a contemporary of Socrates) describes how he learned about Atlantis from his grandfather Critias, who had learned the story from Solon himself.[42] The notion that Solon and the elder Critias were connected with one another comes from Solon's poetry; the scholia on the *Timaeus* 20e (p. 280 Greene) cite two lines from a poem by Solon urging Critias to listen to his father (fr. 22 GPr = 22a W).[43] But Plutarch and Solon's other biographers

(like many people since) apparently failed to see that the story of Atlantis is a myth, composed by Plato himself. Plato warns his audience that he is telling a story by stating that the account is third-hand: Solon learned from an old Egyptian priest in Saïs about the creation of the world and the city of Atlantis and told the story to the elder Critias (*Timaeus* 21a–e).[44] By the time Plutarch wrote his *Life of Solon*, more details had been added to the story.[45] Greeks in the Hellenistic era were eager to link their ancestors to Egypt and to indicate that Greeks had long admired Egyptian culture. Hellenistic biographers deduced from the references to Egypt in the *Timaeus* and other dialogues that Plato had studied with Egyptian priests, even though it is unlikely that he ever went to Egypt.[46]

Biographers also inferred that Solon visited Cyprus, from verses in which he bids farewell to the ruler of the city of Soloi and prays that Aphrodite, the tutelary goddess of the island, will grant him a safe voyage home (fr. 11 GPr = 19 W; *Vit. Sol.* 26). As later biographers understood it, the king of Soloi named his city after Solon because of the advice Solon had given him (*Vit. Arat.* p. 16.14–36 Martin).[47] Hecataeus, in the fifth century, knew about the Solon-Soloi etymology (T 27 GPr = *FGrHist* 1 F 268). In the Hellenistic age, a tradition developed that Solon also spent time in Soloi in Cilicia, which was by then a more impressive place than the Soloi in Cyprus. The origin of that story appears to have been a poem of Euphorion, although Euphorion (fr. 1 Powell) may have been referring to Solon of Lindos (*Vit. Arat.* 3, p. 14 Martin). A papyrus Life of Solon of Athens (*POxy* 680) does not attempt to choose between the two possibile locations; Diogenes Laertius attempted to resolve the problem by saying that Solon visited Cyprus but actually stayed at Soloi in Cilicia (1.50–51).[48]

According to Herodotus and Plutarch, Solon's journey also included a famous encounter with King Croesus of Lydia. In Herodotus' account of the meeting, Solon displays a pious restraint and Croesus an overconfident trust in his wealth and power (1.1.30–33). Herodotus implies that there was such a connection between Solon and Odysseus, "who saw the cities of many men and knew their minds" (*Od.* 1.3); Herodotus' Croesus says to Solon, "as a seeker of wisdom (*philosopheōn*) you have traveled across much of the earth for the purpose of observation (*theoria*)."[49] But even in antiquity the historicity of Solon's visit to Croesus was questioned on chronological grounds: Solon's archonship was dated to 594/3 and Croesus' reign to a generation later.[50] One can attempt to reconcile the dates by supposing that Solon enacted his laws after his archonship, as late as the 570s, which would put his voluntary exile from Athens to Sardis at the beginning of Croesus' reign, but there is rea-

son to consider the meeting "representative" rather than historical.[51] Solon's verses about the dangers of wealth (fr. 18 GPr = 24 W) would have made him appear to be an ideal adviser for the wealthiest, and therefore most vulnerable, monarch of the time. Yet, only one of the speeches that Herodotus puts in Solon's mouth refers explicitly to an extant poem, the verses that give the upper limit of man's life as seventy (fr. 23.18 GPr = 27.18 W; cf. fr. 26 GPr = 20 W). Herodotus' Solon begins from there to calculate the number of days in a man's life and to deduce that the chances are remote of having good fortune last through all of them. In Herodotus, the poet's general speculation has acquired a specific ethical purpose.

A relatively elaborate tradition about Solon was preserved because Athens and her form of government had such great historical importance. If the achievements of a polis like Megara had attracted as much interest from historians, an equally detailed biography of the poet Theognis might have been developed.[52] Verses attributed to Theognis describe his leading role in the politics of his country (39–52, 667–82), his views on government (847–50, 865–68, 891–94), his ethical advice (129–30, 197–208, 373–400), and his complaints about unfair distribution of wealth (831–32, 903–30). But the brief biography of Theognis in the *Suda* (Theta 136) merely summarizes the topics of Theognis' poetry, with specific complaints about "the disgusting and pederastic love-poems scattered among them." Solon, too, wrote about the pleasures of intercourse with young boys, which Plutarch uses to characterize him as the exemplar of the *erōtikos anēr* (fr. 16 GPr = 25 W). But, as we have seen, most of Solon's biographers emphasize his *political* accomplishments.

Since Solon sought to present himself as a heroic defender of his country and of traditional religious ethics, even if more of his poetry had survived, we might not have a more historically accurate picture of his life than we have at present.[53] Starting with his self-portrait, biographers attributed to him specific legislative reforms and political actions. After the Peloponnesian War, fourth-century orators represented Solon as the founder of the Athenian constitution, making him a representative, like Abraham Lincoln, of the values that once made his country great. Such political traditions tend to endow one historical figure with the accomplishments of many,[54] but Solon is like other lawgivers in that he came into prominence during a period of crisis, resolved it by his laws, and left once his code was established.[55] In final tribute, his wisdom is made to seem proverbial and he takes his place as one of the Seven Wise Men. In later times he was regarded by the Athenians as a tutelary hero: visitors saw his walled tomb on their right when they entered Athens (Aelian, *VH* 8.6).[56]

Simonides

We have more "information" about the lives of Simonides and Pindar than we do about the poets who were active in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. More could be known about them, presumably, because their oeuvres appear to have been larger than those of some of their predecessors and because they traveled extensively and performed for a wide variety of occasions. These two poets were perceived as the first professionals, if only because they admittedly received fees for their work.[1] Again their biographers' principal source material was their poetry. Later writers created ingenious narratives to explain obscure passages in their poems and to account for their relationship to each other and to their clients. In addition, the biographers sought to represent both poets as wise men, to help account for the success they enjoyed during their lifetimes. It is easier to trace the development of Pindar's biography, because a large corpus of Pindar's works survives, along with several versions of his life, whereas for Simonides we must rely on fragments of his poem and an abbreviated biography preserved in the *Suda*. I shall discuss the development of Pindar's biography in the next chapter, but I draw on his poetry in this chapter to help reconstruct the context of some of Simonides' poems.

Simonides (born ca. 556 B.C.) appears in the biographical tradition as a sage, a master of memory, and a miser. The poet's reputation as a wise man most probably has its origin in statements about human experience in his poetry. Analogues to some of Simonides' observations can be found in the victory odes of Pindar and Bacchylides: the futility of fighting against necessity, the inability of any man to have complete good fortune.[2] A scrap of papyrus

from one of Simonides' victory odes preserves part of a statement about fate (*PMG* 519 fr. 79, cf. 514); another ode compares good fortune to the period of winter weather known as halcyon days (508). Pindar, a younger contemporary of Simonides, speaks of human hopes whirled up and down by the wind (*Ol.* 12.5–6a).[3] Sentiments about the frailty of human life are cited from Simonides' *threnoi* ("lamentations," *PMG* 520–22); quotations from Pindar's *threnoi* suggest that he offered consolation to his patrons by describing happiness in the next world (fr. 130–34; cf. 129). In a poem for Scopas of Thessaly (*PMG* 542), Simonides reflects on an apothegm of the wise man Pittacus about the vicissitudes of life and the limits of human excellence.[4] Simonides' comments, like Solon's, make immediate sense out of context because of their directness and the precision of the metaphors (e.g., *PMG* 521.3–4).

Although none of the sayings attributed to Simonides by Xenophon in the fourth century or by later biographers bears close resemblance to any of Simonides' surviving poetry, the character of the poet's style is reflected in the clarity and practicality of the observations attributed to him by later writers. Pindar in *Pythian* 1 tersely advises Hieron, "Envy is better than pity, do not relinquish what is good" (85–86). The same advice takes on a more diplomatic character in a line attributed to Simonides in Xenophon's dialogue *Hieron*, where Simonides explains to the tyrant why this "philosophy" works: if you enrich your friends, you make yourself powerful and loved, "so being fortunate you will not be envied" (xi.5).[5]

Simonides' reputation as a master of memory appears to have been based not on his poetry but on later stories about him. A papyrus biography from the third century A.D. states, "Some attribute to him the discovery of mnemonics and he demonstrates this somewhere by means of his epigrams" (*POxy* 1800 i.36).[6] The author of this text was probably referring to three epigrams about Simonides, which almost certainly date from Hellenistic times. These epigrams relate (1) that he taught choruses and won prizes when he was very old (*FGE* 800–801 = *EG* 189–90, *FGE* 792–95 = *EG* 181–84), and (2) that "no one's *mnēmē* compares with Simonides' at eighty" (14W = *EG* 180A–180B).[7] An active old age lent plausibility to the earlier of his birth dates, recorded in the *Suda* as the 56th Olympiad (556–52 B.C).[8] If he had been born then rather than in the alternate dating of the 62nd Olympiad (532–28) and died in the 78th (468–64), he would have lived at least into his late eighties.[9] But the notion that Simonides had an extraordinary memory appears to have come from a misunderstanding. Although, in the epigram, *mnēmē* served as a metrically convenient synonym for *kleos*, "reputation," in later times the word came to be understood

in its active sense, as "memory." It was probably on the basis of this misunderstanding that in Hellenistic biographies Simonides came to have a reputation for mnemonics, much in the same way as Solon's use of *agorē* ("speech," fr. 1.2 W) was later understood to mean that he spoke in the "marketplace."

Simonides' *Suda* biography relates that "he discovered the art of mnemonics and long vowels and double consonants and the third note on the lyre" and that he invented the signs for the long vowels *ēta* and *ōmega,* and the double letters *xi* and *psi* (Sigma 439). Did a poem attributed to Simonides refer to these "new" letters in the Attic alphabet?[10] Biographers invented elaborate stories to explain why poets paid particular attention to certain sounds or words. In order to explain why Pindar says in a dithyramb, "in past times song was long drawn out and the letter *san* was counterfeit," the fourth-century biographer Clearchus alleged that Pindar had been criticized for overusing the sound *s* (fr. 88 Wehrli = Ath. x.455c = Pind., fr. 70b 1–2).[11] Simonides' fondness for wordplay also may have suggested that he was interested in language. For example, the proposition "if the dreadful were dreadful to you" (*PMG* 543.18) anticipates Socrates in using antithesis as a means of definition.[12] In the Hellenistic era, Simonides was thought to have been the author of intricate riddles that required long and complex explanations (fr. 34 Wehrli = Ath. x.456c).[13]

Many stories survive about Simonides' love for money. Similar anecdotes were told about Pindar, to judge from what is reported in the ancient commentaries (or scholia) on his victory odes. No references to money can now be found in the extant scraps of Simonides' poetry, but certainly one such story was generated by a phrase in an ode celebrating a victory won by a chariot drawn by mules. The anecdote was inspired by the hyperbolic rhetoric used by the poet to describe the winning mules, "hail, daughters of storm-footed horses" (*PMG* 515). According to Aristotle, Simonides had at first refused to compose a victory ode because the victor offered too small a fee; then, when offered more money, the poet overdid the praise. As Aristotle observes: "The mules were also daughters of jackasses" (*Rhet.* 1405b 24–28). The notion that Simonides was interested in money dates back to his own lifetime. Xenophanes, in the early fifth century, is said to have called Simonides a "miser" (21B DK), and to have made fun of Homer and Hesiod as well; in his *Silloi* he wished to show that the epic poets most esteemed for their wisdom (21 B 10) were not so clever after all, because they never questioned the logical flaws in conventional religion.[14] In Athenian comedy Simonides was an archetypal miser; a character in Aristophanes makes a joke about Simonides' being old and shabby and ready to go to sea on a mat in order to make money (*Peace* 697–

98).[15] The fourth-century biographer Chamaeleon states as a fact, "Simonides was in truth a skinflint and shamefully greedy" (fr. 33 Wehrli = Ath. xiv.656d).

Similar stories were told about Pindar, to judge from what is reported in the ancient commentaries, or scholia, on his victory odes. According to a scholion on Pindar's *Isthmian Ode* 2, when Pindar says that the Muse now is paid for her services, the Alexandrian poet-scholar Callimachus understood him to be referring specifically to Simonides (schol. *Isthm.* 2.9a, III p. 214 Dr, Callim. fr. 222 Pf).[16] Pindar himself says nothing in that passage about any other poet; when he observes that the Muse must now be paid, he does so as affirmation that despite his being hired in order to praise, his admiration for the victor is sincere.[17] Nonetheless, elsewhere in the scholia to Pindar, a compliment to a patron for his generosity is often interpreted as a reference to payment. The commentators account for a prominent statement about men's respect for gold by explaining: "We know that Pindar was completely avaricious ('a gold-lover'). Here he testifies to his own miserliness ('love for silver') when he praises wealth and hints that it is appropriate for those who are praised to repay Pindar with gold" (schol. *Isthm.* 5.2a, III p. 242 Dr).[18] When in another ode Pindar says "the wise are not hurt by gain," an ancient commentator thought the poet was suggesting that victors should pay to be immortalized (schol. *Nem.* 7.25a, III 120 Dr). The scholia even suggest that Pindar omits reference to an earlier victory because "perhaps" he had not been given the commission to write an ode for the victor (schol. *Pyth.* 10 inscr., II p. 242 Dr).[19] In Pindar's case it is clear that biographers often provided literal explanations for figurative language in the original poems.[20] When Pindar contrasts his own "winged" verse with the stationary art of a sculptor, an ancient commentator explained that Pindar had asked three thousand drachmas to write an ode; the family requesting the ode replied that for the same price they could have a statue. Later they gave in and paid him, but he began the poem by referring to a statue, in order to reprove them (schol. *Nem.* 5.1a, III p. 98 Dr). This story appears to have been invented to explain why the poem begins with the dramatic statement "I am not a sculptor."

Like Pindar, Simonides was a traveling poet who was entertained by his patrons at symposia. Both Pindar and Bacchylides pay tribute to their patrons' hospitality (e.g., *Ol.* 1.11, *Nem.* 1.19–22, Bacch. 3.15); they contrast themselves with abusive poets who fatten themselves on hatred (*Pyth.* 2.54, 55, Bacch. 3.68).[21] Although none of Simonides' lyric poems survives in its entirety, we can only assume, on the basis of what other poets did, that he would have expressed in his poems his gratitude for the hospitality that he received. But in

comedy especially, the grateful poets were represented as parasites. In Aristophanes' *Birds*, a lyric poet sings songs "à la Simonides" (919) and recites some garbled Pindar (941–45) in the hope of getting food and a new cloak.[22] A comic scene or narrative may have inspired the story told by Chamaeleon in his biography of Simonides about how the poet complained when he did not receive a share of the roast hare served to Hieron's other guests (fr. 33 Wehrli). In the biographies, the hospitable homes of these poets' patrons (e.g., *Ol.* 1.11, *Nem.* 1.21–22) became the setting of dinner parties where the poets had to beg for their food. Obscure references to greed and to slanderers invited negative interpretation: in Pindar's *Pythian* 2, ancient commentators suggested that Pindar was criticizing Hieron for giving the commission for the ode not to himself but to Bacchylides (e.g., schol. *Pyth.* 2.131a, II p. 53 Dr).[23]

In the third century B.C., a story was told about Simonides that exemplified both his mnemonic skill and his interest in money. In his *Aetia*, Callimachus related how Simonides was buried in Acragas in Sicily (fr. 64), away from his birthplace, like Homer and Hesiod. In the poem Callimachus has the dead Simonides claim that his tomb was torn down by an "evil man," a general who did not fear the Dioscuri (Castor and Polydeuces). According to the summary of Callimachus' poem in the *Suda* (Sigma 441), the Dioscuri had summoned the poet outside just before the house fell down on his patrons, the family of Scopas, the wealthy Thessalian for whom he wrote the poem quoting the apothegm of the sage Pittacus about human excellence (*PMG* 542).[24] More details are given in Cicero's version of the story: Scopas had complained that Simonides had devoted so much of his song to the praise of Castor and Polydeuces that he should ask them to pay half his fee (*De Orat.* 2.86/*PMG* 510).[25] Afterwards Simonides was able to identify the bodies by recalling the seating arrangement.[26] This story about a poet's piety towards the gods has an analogue in Eratosthenes' account of how Hesiod was found to have been falsely accused and his murderers identified and sacrificed to the gods of hospitality.[27] The improbable notion of the falling roof could derive from a mistaken interpretation of Simonides' original poem, in what a commentator might have thought was a reference to the fall of a house (*oikos*), though the poet probably meant it in the sense of family, rather than a literal edifice).[28] Inconsistency in the tradition suggests that some later writers did not directly consult Simonides' text.[29] Quintilian notes that different sites were given for the banquet and the names of the patrons; he thought the story fictitious, since he could find no reference to it in Simonides' poems and felt certain that the poet would have mentioned a tale so complimentary to himself if he had known about it (*Inst. Orat.* 6).

In the fourth century, Simonides' supposed interest in money was represented as having a positive ethical function.[30] He is represented as advising friends and patrons to conserve resources and guard against other men's greed. Xenophon has Hieron ask Simonides how to conduct himself as tyrant and also question him about general philosophical issues.[31] Aristotle quotes from what Simonides said to Hieron's wife about "wisdom and wealth" (*Rhet.* 1391a 8).[32] A collection of these sayings about expenditures, "respected for their truth," was circulating in Egypt in the third century (*PHibeh* 1.17).[33] In third-century Alexandria, Theocritus could count on his audience and King Hieron II of Syracuse to understand that in his poem (*Id.* 16) Simonides served as a representative of all the poets who needed the king's support.[34] Theocritus drew on the positive biographical tradition that gave Simonides' views on wealth a moral purpose. Similarly, the biographer Chamaeleon tells how Simonides sold most of the daily allotment of food given him by Hieron (fr. 33 Wehrli). The same story was told as a criticism of Themistocles (Plut., *Vit. Them.* 5.1), but Chamaeleon has Simonides claim that his conduct serves as an example of Hieron's generosity and his own moderation.[35]

Since stories about Simonides were told as early as the fifth century and relatively few citations of his lyric verse survive, it would seem that from the fourth century on Simonides' biography had become more interesting and accessible than much of his poetry. An indication of its importance is that Horace claims authority because he practices the kind of morality that Simonides preaches in his poetry. Even though Horace does not claim that the Muses spoke to him directly (cf. Callim. fr. 2, 1.21–22 Pf.), he describes how, on a number of occasions, the gods kept him safe from danger (*Carm.* 3.4.9–28).[36] The way Simonides is characterized by his biographers serves as an index of popular taste. As time goes on, the content of poetry matters more than its style; specifics disappear into the generic;[37] the status of poets is changed from that of honored guest to that of learned dependent. Simonides is not remembered by biographers as the poet whose elegies about the battles of Salamis and Plataea influenced Herodotus and Ephorus.[38] Only fragments of his lyrics survive, perhaps because the general reflections in his epigrams better suit his character as described in his biographies. Epigrams in his style were steadily attributed to him.[39] As in the case of later additions to the collection of Theognis' poems, the new verses were not meant simply to deceive.[40] In essence, imitation verse serves much the same purpose as does biography, in that it represents a contemporary understanding of the poet.

Pindar

Ancient biographies gave their readers several different portraits of the lyric poet Pindar (518–446? B.C.). In the preceding chapter we saw how Pindar could be characterized as greedy for money. But in the *Vita* in the Ambrosian manuscripts of his victory odes and in the *Vita* attributed to the fourteenth-century A.D. monk Thomas Magister, Pindar emerges as a holy man. The ancient commentaries in the manuscripts speak of his often combative relations with his patrons and the poets with whom he was in direct competition. Yet, another impression of his character is provided in a small collection of his apothegms, where the poet assumes the role of a wise man. That such discrepancies in characterization should occur is not surprising; each was derived from a different aspect of his poetry.

The Ambrosian *Vita* begins with a discussion of Pindar's origins.[1] He came from the Theban village of Cynocephalae. His father was either Daïphantus or Pagondas or Scopelinus (who, according to some sources, was his paternal uncle and taught him to play the *aulos*) (*Vit. Amb.* p. 1.2–5 Dr). His mother was Cleodice or Cledice. The range of possibilities offered for his father's name suggests that there was no information available to his biographers other than what they could deduce from his poetry or poetry about him. A biography from the second or third century A.D. records that "according to Corinna and other poetesses he was the son of Scopelinus; according to most poets he was the son of Daïphantus" (*POxy* 2438.1–4).[2] The *Suda* biography of Pindar prefers Daïphantus, because "Scopelinus' son is less famous and a relative of

Pindar's." The Thoman *Vita* (p. 4.11 Dr) makes Scopelinus Pindar's stepfather and teacher, and has him send Pindar on to the poet Lasus of Hermione for instruction.[3] Lasus may have been included in the biography because he was later thought to have influenced Pindar. The names suggested for members of his family may have been found in poems that Pindar himself composed for local occasions, as seems to be the case for the other members of his family (discussed below). Names also may have been deduced from the works of the Boeotian poets Corinna or Myrtis, where they were mentioned in ways that allowed for variety of interpretations.[4]

After listing the several possible names for his parents, the *Vita* relates stories of his early recognition. In an anecdote attributed by the writer of the *Vita* to the biographers Chamaeleon (fr. 32a Wehrli) and Ister (*FGrHist* 334 F 77), the poet discovers his calling on Mt. Helicon (*Vit. Amb.* p. 1.7–9 Dr). It was on that mountain that the Muses spoke to Hesiod, gave him his laurel branch, told him to sing of "what will be and what was before," and ordered him to sing of the eternal gods but first and last of themselves (*Theog.* 32–34). By contrast, Pindar is asleep when he learns that he is to become a poet. He had been hunting, and when he awakens, he finds that bees have built a honeycomb in his mouth.[5] The idea of bees building a honeycomb in the poet's mouth gives the traditional metaphor of poetry as honey a comic tangibility; we might compare the sixth-century A.D. epic poet who described a bronze statue of Homer on which "a Pierian bee wandered about his divine mouth, bringing forth a dripping honeycomb" (*Anth. Pal.* 2.342–43).[6] Some of Pindar's later biographers said that he only dreamt about the honeycomb; here we may compare how the fifth-century A.D. Neo-Platonist scholar Proclus, in his biography, insisted that Hesiod's encounter with the Muses was meant allegorically, or took place in a dream.[7]

The next anecdote in the *Vita* testifies both to Pindar's early talent and to his piety. Significantly, it takes place in Athens. Pindar's teacher Agathocles (or Apollodorus) was away and entrusted the training of the cyclic choruses in his absence to Pindar, even though he was still a boy (*Vit. Amb.* p. 1.11–12 Dr). There is an analogy in the Herodotean Life of Homer, in which the school teacher Phemius recognized the boy Melesigenes' talent and bequeathed his school to him when he died (*Vit. Hdt.* 5).[8] But the story about Pindar also gives special credit to the Athenians for recognizing his talent: when Pindar wrote a dithyramb praising Athens (fr. 76), the Thebans fined him a thousand drachmas, which the Athenians paid on his behalf (*Vit. Amb.* p. 1.15–2.1 Dr). Here Athens appears to be the center of culture, as in the fourth-century notion

that Tyrtaeus must have come from Athens, since the Spartans in their day produced no art or literature.

The *Vita* then offers further testimony of divine and posthumous recognition: Pan was heard singing one of Pindar's paeans between Mt. Helicon and Mt. Cithaeron (*Vit. Amb.* p. 2.2–6 Dr).[9] The biographer says that, to thank the god, the poet wrote a new song, which begins with an invocation of the god (fr. 95).[10] In another fragment of this song the poet addresses Pan as "companion of the great Mother, object of the holy Graces' devotion." In *Pythian Ode* 3, Pindar says he "will pray to the Mother to whom in the night with Pan the Maidens often celebrate in song beside my door" (77–79); in the scholia that passage is connected with the story of Pan singing Pindar's paean. The Mother in the hymn to Pan and in *Pythian* 3 is almost certainly the goddess Cybele or Dindymene, whose cult had come to Greece shortly before the Persian Wars.[11] The "maidens" (*korai*) in *Pythian* 3 are probably the Graces mentioned in Pindar's song to Pan (fr. 95). But in the *Vita*, the story about Pan is followed by an anecdote about Pindar and *Demeter*: the goddess appeared to Pindar in a dream and demanded a hymn for herself; Pindar wrote the song and built an altar to her and to Pan in front of his house (*Vit. Amb.* p. 2.6–10 Dr).[12] The idea that Pindar was referring to Demeter rather than Dindymene probably derives from the presence of the epithet *thesmophoros* in the opening line of the hymn: "Law-bringing (*thesmophoros*) mistress of the golden reins (*chrysanios*)" (fr. 37).[13] A later commentator might easily have supposed that these lines referred to Demeter, one of whose cult titles was *thesmophoros* and who was celebrated throughout the Greek world in the festival of the Thesmophoria.[14] But the cult title *thesmophoros* was also applied to the Mother of the Gods (i.e., Cybele or Dindymene) in a fourth-century inscription (*IG* VII 2452).[15] Pausanias thought the lines were addressed to Demeter's daughter Persephone (9.23.3). Apparently the name of the intended goddess was not specified in the hymn.

Taken out of its context, the first-person statement in the Pythian 3 passage generated a considerable aetiological mythology. The scholia on the passage about the Mother and Pan in Pindar's *Pythian Ode* 3 cite Aristodemus of Thebes (*FGrHist* 383 F* 13), a commentator in first-century B.C. Alexandria.[16] Aristodemus describes the epiphany of the Mother as an event that involved not just Pindar but the people of Thebes:

> Pindar was giving a lesson to Olympichus the *aulos*-player when there was a noise and flame on the mountain where they were practicing. Pindar thought

> that he saw a stone statue of the Mother of the gods in front of him, and set up a statue near his house of the Mother of the gods and Pan. The citizens of Thebes sent an inquiry to the Delphic oracle about what had happened, and the oracle confirmed that a shrine be established to the Mother of the gods. The citizens were amazed that Pindar had anticipated the oracle and honored Pindar equally in the ritual to the goddess. (schol. *Pyth*. 3.137b)

In the original hymn, Pindar might even have described an epiphany of the goddess herself and the response of onlookers, as in the *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*, where the ship's captain and crew respond to the god's presence and the captain establishes his cult.[17] Later writers tended not to believe that poets themselves actually experienced such epiphanies.[18] In the case of the hymn to the Mother, Aristodemus (or his sources) provided a commonsense interpretation, having Pindar see a stone statue, and turning the episode into a civic event.[19] Such homely touches are characteristic of the aesthetics of the Hellenistic era. Callimachus, making striking use of a conventional formula, has the dead Simonides engage the audience directly in the story of the desecration of his grave (fr. 64 Pf). Eratosthenes has Hesiod's dog identify his murderers (fr. 19 Powell). But the original hymn would not have mentioned the "equal" honor given by the Thebans to Pindar himself.

In later times, it appears, only the first line of the hymn was known or there was no further identifying information about the goddess's identity. Pausanias was given a different account of the hymn's subject and of the circumstances surrounding its composition (9.23.3–4). He was told that it was a hymn to Persephone; that goddess (rather than her mother Demeter) had appeared to Pindar in a dream and claimed that she was the only deity for whom he had not composed a song, but she predicted that he would do so when he was about to come to her. He died ten days later but subsequently appeared in a dream and sang his hymn for Persephone to a relative of his, an old woman who knew all his other songs, and she wrote down what she had heard.[20] Pausanias quotes the song's opening line "law-bringing (*thesmophoros*) mistress of the golden reins (*chrysanion*)" (fr. 37) and explains that the epithet "with golden reins" was one of Hades' titles, so that was "clearly" a reference to the rape of Persephone.

The *Vita* relates other signal instances of the gods' respect for the Pindar (*Vit. Amb.* 2.10–16 Dr). When Thebes was destroyed, Pindar's house was preserved by the Spartan general Pausanias. Someone had written a trochaic line on the house, "Do not burn the house of Pindar the Muses' poet."[21] The

Vita then adds that when the priest closes the doors of the temple of Apollo at Delphi he invites Pindar to come to the god's sacrificial table (*Vit. Amb.* p. 2.14–16 Dr).[22] He was born (as his own words suggest, fr. 193) during the Pythian festival (*Vit. Amb.* p. 2.16–18 Dr). Pilgrims to the shrine of Ammon asked what would be best for Pindar, and the poet died in that same year (*Vit. Amb.* p. 2.18–21 Dr). The *Suda* biography (*Pi* 1617) offers a different version of the story: Pindar himself asked to be given what was best and suddenly died, in a theater while lying in the arms of his beloved Theoxenus of Tenedos, for whom he wrote an encomium (fr. 123). Both stories are variations of the tale Herodotus tells about the young Argives Cleobis and Biton, to whom the god granted what is best in life, dying just after they had performed a heroic feat (1.31.3).[23]

The *Vita* then draws on Pindar's poetry to deduce that he was a younger contemporary of Simonides; both poets visited the home of Hieron the tyrant of Syracuse. The names are then given of Pindar's wife, Megacleia, and his son, Daïphantus, "for whom also he wrote a *partheneion*" (*Vit. Amb.* p. 3.2–6 Dr). Since sons were often named after their grandfathers, biographers would have deduced that Daïphantus was also the name of Pindar's father. A similar example of deduction (and confusion) occurred in the case of Sappho. Sappho speaks of a *pais* (child or slave) Cleis (fr. 132 V), who was understood by biographers to be her daughter (*POxy* 1800.i.14); Sappho's *Suda* biography gives Cleis also as the name of her mother (Sigma 107).[24] Pindar's *Vita* also provides the names of Pindar's two daughters. According to the papyrus biography, Pindar "mentions" his daughters Protomache and Eumetis in the same *partheneion* as Daïphantus (fr. 94c; *POxy* 2438.24–25, 28–30). Was their relationship explicitly stated, or was it rather *inferred* from the song by biographers, since in *partheneia* the names of all the girls in the chorus might have been mentioned, as they are Alcman's *partheneion* (*PMG* 1.70–77)?[25] The names of daughters are rarely given in biographies, so the existence of daughters (and their singing ability) may have been deduced from Pindar's reference to "*korai* (girls or daughters) who sing at night to the Mother with Pan near my door" (*Pyth.* 3.77; schol. *Pyth.* 3.139a). We can compare the way Hesiod's statement "Neither may I nor my son be called a just man" encouraged his biographers to suggest that Hesiod had raped Stesichorus' mother. Theban maidens also sing to Pagondas, one of the names suggested for Pindar's father (fr. 94b, 10).

The names of some of these relatives also represent aspects of Pindar's professional achievement. Cleodice or Cledice, Pindar's mother's name in the Ambrosian *Vita*, means "justly famous."[26] His wife has the equally suitable

name Megacleia ("of great fame") or, as in the Metrical *Vita*, Timoxeine ("honored by strangers"). The Metrical *Vita* also gives Pindar a twin brother, Eritimus ("honored in strife"),[27] who was a boxer and a wrestler, as if to account for Pindar's knowledge of athletics. Like Hesiod's mother, Pycimede ("very clever"), and his sons Mnaseas and Archiepes ("recorder," "initiator of epic verse"), the names Cleodice, Timoxene, and Eritimus do not occur in Pindar's surviving poetry; their inconsistency suggests that they derive from no single source or tradition.[28] The Ambrosian *Vita* concludes with an epigram that depicts Protomache and Eumetis lamenting their father's death (*Vit. Amb.* p. 3.11–14 Dr); the epigram says that the daughters brought back the poet's ashes from Argos, though without offering any explanation for his presence there.[29] The compiler of the *Vita* does not refer at the end to the story about Pindar's death given earlier in his account.

Although in the Ambrosian *Vita* Pindar is portrayed as a pious poet who is dear to the gods, in the ancient commentaries on the victory odes he is combative and competitive. The difference in characterization derives from the way in which the first-person speaker in the odes describes himself. Ancient commentators, in attempting to interpret obscure references in his poetry, tended to imagine that what the poet said referred primarily to his own personal experience.[30] When he uses metaphors to describe his prowess as a poet, the scholia suggest that he is comparing himself with his poetic competitors. A pair of chattering crows are Bacchylides and Simonides (schol. *Ol.* 2.154b). Jackdaws that keep low while the swift eagle catches his prey are connected with Bacchylides (schol. *Nem.* 3.143), as are an ape's cleverly deceptive antics (schol. *Pyth.* 2.163b, 166d, 171bcd). Unnamed envious "enemies" (schol. *Nem.* 4.60b) and the "greedy Muse who works for money" (schol. *Isthm.* 2.9a, b, 15a) are construed as references to Simonides.[31] When the poet advises himself to hold out "against counter-strategies" like a wrestler, the commentators interpreted the metaphor as a reference to poetic rivalry with Simonides and contrasted the two poets' styles: "This seems to refer to Simonides, he usually used digressions" (schol. *Nem.* 4.60b).

There are also stories about Pindar's rivalry with the Boeotian poets Corinna and Myrtis. Biographers said that Myrtis was the teacher of both Pindar (Pi 1617) and Corinna (*Suda*, Kappa 2087), but the evidence for such relationships usually consisted of perceived influence.[32] Corinna is quoted as saying, "I blame clear-voiced Myrtis because being a woman she entered into rivalry (*eris*) with Pindar" (*PMG* 664a). The author of the *Suda* entry on Corinna appears to have had this passage in mind, because he specifically re-

fers to "the *woman* Myrtis." Commentators seem to have understood "rivalry" in this passage to be a reference to a confrontation among poets, though in practice Corinna may have simply been criticizing Myrtis for writing for the same kinds of occasions that Pindar did. Corinna is quoted as saying later in the same poem that she (by contrast) wrote about "the achievements of heroes and heroines" (presumably, as opposed to victorious athletes). Plutarch tells a story of how Corinna first criticized the young Pindar for using too little narrative in his songs, and then for including too many stories at one time (*Mor.* 347f), a comment that Plutarch connects with a passage in which Pindar tells three myths about Thebes in quick succession at the beginning of a song (fr. 29a). Ancient commentators apparently did not understand that the rapid listing of myths was a priamel, a rhetorical device that was intended to praise rather than to defend.[33] A rhetorical query in the poet's voice, "if we have avoided with our true words the ancient taunt 'Boeotian pig'" (*Ol.* 6.89–90, schol. *Ol.* 6.152, cf. fr. 83), became the inspiration for a story in which Pindar criticized the Thebans' lack of musical taste and called the victorious Corinna "a Boeotian pig" (Ael., *VH* 13.25).[34] Corinna's *Suda* biography notes that, "as the story goes," Corinna was victorious five times over Pindar (Kappa 2087). In reality it is highly unlikely that Pindar and Corinna ever met, since Pindar lived at least half a century before Corinna.[35]

In addition to discovering indications of hostility between Pindar and other poets, the commentators also appear to have assumed that there was an underlying tension between the poet and his patrons. To them, that Rhadamanthys did not enjoy deceptions means that Hieron should not listen to slander about Pindar (schol. *Pyth.* 2.133a Dr): "It is likely," the commentary suggests, that Pindar was accused of being friendly with Thrasydaeus, the son of Hieron's rival Theron (schol. *Pyth.* 2.132b Dr). His not wishing to comment on "acts done justly and unjustly" is also interpreted as a reference to the quarrel between the two Sicilian tyrants (schol. *Ol.* 2.29c). Characteristically, the wise Simonides is credited with having made peace between the two rulers by his timely intervention (schol. *Ol.* 2.29d Dr).[36] In the absence of other explanations, money is introduced as a factor. That the short measure of a song prevents him from saying everything indicates that he was paid only to sing one triad (schol. *Isthm.* 1.85b). That he is not a maker of statues means that his patrons thought he charged too much for an ode (schol. *Nem.* 5.1a). Failure to mention a victory means that he was not paid to sing about it (schol. *Pyth.* 10. inscr., II p. 42 Dr).[37]

Commentators also introduced the notion of tension between the poet

and his audiences. That the poetic speaker in *Nemean* 7 "did not savage Neoptolemus in ruthless words" suggested to Aristodemus that Pindar was being criticized by the Aeginetans for what he had said in his *Paean* 6 for the Delphians (schol. *Nem.* 7. 94a, 150a Dr).[38] Even asking a rhetorical question could be interpreted as a sign of insecurity.[39] For example, Pindar in his encomium for Xenophon of Corinth wrote, "I wonder what the Lords of the Isthmus will say of me, who am composing this beginning for a song thought to be honey-sweet, as a companion of shared women" (fr. 122.12–15). By "Lords of the Isthmus" Pindar meant the judges at the Isthmian games, but the fourth-century biographer Chamaeleon assumed that the poet was talking about the citizens of Corinth. In his analysis of the encomium about the "shared women," Chamaeleon, taking the lines out of context, explains, "It is evident that when Pindar speaks to the prostitutes that there was concern about how the matter would appear to the Corinthians." Trusting in himself, as seems likely, he wrote immediately, "We have taught how to test gold with a clean touchstone" (fr. 31 Wehrli). The phrases "it is evident" and "as seems likely" indicate that Chamaeleon is offering his readers his own interpretation, relying on logic and a sense of what would have been appropriate.[40] But behind what he says is an assumption that the relations between Pindar and his public were strained.

The portrait of the combative Pindar had some influence on his characterization in the various apothegms attributed to him, in which he appears less philosophical and more acerbic than Simonides.[41] The notion that he was a wise man probably derives from the many gnomic statements in his poetry, but the nature of his first-person statements makes him appear to be somewhat personal and defensive, where Simonides seems to be detached.[42] When Pindar says that mortals should search for what is possible and realize their limitations, he involves his poetic "I," advising it "not to strive for immortal life, but drain your practical skill" (*Pyth.* 3.59–61). Simonides instead separates himself from ordinary men, as in "I will never look for the impossible and throw my life away in empty hope" (*PMG* 542.21–23). One of Pindar's apothegms is based directly on a verse of a poem (now lost): "he said that natural philosophers 'pluck the fruit of unripe wisdom'" (fr. 209).[43] His apparent refusal to toady to Hieron in odes like *Pythian* 2 may have provided the inspiration for the apothegm "When asked why Simonides spent time with the tyrants in Sicily, while he himself did not wish to, he said, 'because I wish to live for myself, not another.'"

By the third century B.C., Pindar was imagined as the combative "I" who speaks about his rivals and detractors in his poems. Callimachus' claim to po-

etic authority in the Prologue to the *Aetia* (fr. 1 Pf) is based in part on Pindar's *Paean* VIIb (fr. 52b).[44] There Pindar claims to be different from poets who "go down Homer's worn wagon-road" and says that men who do not compose poetry have "blind hearts" (11–12, 19–20). Callimachus in his adaptation speaks of finding a path that is not only untrodden but narrow (25–28); then he characterizes himself in terms of his art, as the "slight one, the winged" (32–33). He prefaces his characterization of himself by describing what his envious enemies the Telchines, "ignorant men, no friends of the Muses," say against his kind of poetry and what he replies in self-defense (1–20). The ancient commentators interpreted Pindar's description of envious slanderers in *Pyth.* 2.76–77 (schol. *Pyth.* 2.136b) as a response to criticism by political rivals, even though in context he mentions the slanderers in order to illustrate the dangers of ingratitude.

None of the different portraits of Pindar tells us how the poet lived or worked, or what made his poetry so distinctive that it was admired throughout antiquity. Instead we have a Pindar who is admired for his piety and remembered for his competitions with other poets. When Pausanias made his tour of Boeotia in the second century A.D., he was shown Pindar's tomb (9.23.2); and outside of the walls of Thebes he was taken to see the ruins of Pindar's house and, near it, a sanctuary of Mother Dindymene (9.25.3). Presumably this last site was the place that the poet was thought to have alluded to in *Pythian* 3.77–79.[45] Pausianias was told that the sanctuary had been dedicated by the poet and contained statues by local Theban artists. At the temple of Ammon (9.16.1), Pausanias saw a statue (*agalma*) by Calamis, "which Pindar had dedicated," and a plaque with the text of the hymn to Ammon which Pindar had composed for the Cyreneans (fr. 36).[46] At Tanagra, Pausanias saw a memorial depicting Corinna's victory over Pindar (9.22.3). At Delphi in the temple of Apollo he was shown the iron chair where Pindar was said to have composed his songs for the god (10.24.3). Of these relics, only Pindar's house is mentioned in his surviving poetry (*Pyth.* 3.78). All the others offer mute testimony to events in his *biography*, such as his competition with Corinna, Ammon's favor towards him, and his connection with Apollo and the oracle at Delphi.

Aeschylus

In their efforts to reconstruct the lives of dramatists, ancient writers faced even greater obstacles than those confronted by the biographers of the archaic poets. It was easier to deduce biographical information from lyric and elegiac verses, because they contained first-person statements. There was no such opportunity for direct self-expression in drama. Instead, biographers were compelled to infer what they could from the dramas, whose plots and characters were drawn from mythology. Some biographers tried to connect characters and plots to the poets' life experiences, or they interpreted the reflections of choruses as the personal expressions of the poets. Biographers also relied on the characterizations of the tragic poets in Athenian comedies, which often used poets as characters or made fun of them or what they had written. Aristophanes made poets resemble what they had written. In a lost comedy, one of his characters says, "[Euripides] is like what he makes his characters say" (fr. 694 KA, *PCG* III.2, p. 356).[1] The description of Aeschylus (525/4–456/5 B.C.) in the *Vita* that is attached to the manuscripts of his plays was inspired by the pious and ponderous Aeschylus of Aristophanes' *Frogs*. In that comedy, Aeschylus speaks in his own style, with complex compound adjectives (841–42). He displays hostility toward popularization and immorality and seems appalled by what Euripides wrote. When, in the comedy, the two poets compete against each other, Aeschylus is distinguished from Euripides by his piety: he begins the contest by praying to Demeter, "who has nourished my mind; may I be worthy of your mysteries" (886–87).

In the *Frogs*, Euripides accuses Aeschylus of babbling about whatever came

into his head and interrupting and confusing the audience (945).[2] Even though this information comes from comedy, it is recorded as fact by later biographers. The fourth-century biographer Chamaeleon (or his source) deduced from Aeschylus' portrayal of drunkards in his satyr play *Cabiri* that "what the tragedian did himself he has fastened on to his heroes—he wrote his tragedies while he was drunk." He quotes Sophocles as saying, "Aeschylus, you write what you ought to write but without knowing it" (fr. 40ab Wehrli = *TrGF* 3, T 117 = *TrGF* 4, T 52a). When he was shown the statue of Aeschylus in the theater of Dionysus in Athens, Pausanias was told that the poet said that when he was a boy keeping watch over the grapes in a vineyard, he fell asleep, and the god appeared to him, and as soon as he woke up he found that he could write verses; "that is what he himself said" (1.21.2–3 = *TrGF* 3, T 111). Aeschylus was asleep during the process of inspiration, unlike Hesiod, who claimed to have seen and heard what the Muses said to him on Mt. Helicon (*Theog*. 32–34).[3] The stories characterize the creative process as both divinely inspired and mindlessly automatic; there is no mention of training, study, or teachers.

Aeschylus' *Vita* states that "his family was aristocratic" (*TrGF* 3, T 1.4) and that Aeschylus came from the deme of Eleusis (*TrGF* 3, T 1.1).[4] That is certainly possible, because there was an Eleusinian Aeschylus in the fourth century.[5] But the association with Eleusis may have been inspired by his poetic description of the Mysteries in dramas like the *Eleusinioi.* An anecdote attributed to the fourth-century polymath Heraclides of Pontus says that Aeschylus was put on trial for profaning the Mysteries and was then let off because he and his brother had fought and been wounded at Marathon (fr. 170 Wehrli = 97 Schütrumpf = *TrGF* 3, T 93b). Heraclides' source might well have been a scene in comedy, with a plot roughly analogous to Aristophanes' *Frogs*, in which Aeschylus and Euripides are put on trial but Aeschylus is allowed to return from the Lower World to Athens because of his previous services to the *polis*.

Comedy is also the primary source of later anecdotes about Aeschylus' military service. In the *Frogs* Aeschylus acts as warlike and angry as Achilles (992–95); he embodies the sophist Gorgias' characterization of his *Seven against Thebes* as "full of Ares" (82 B 24 DK = *Ran*. 1021). Aristophanes' Aeschylus also cites the *Persians* as evidence of his patriotism (1026). In the *Frogs* Aristophanes has the god Dionysus state that Aeschylus modeled his lyric verses on "rope-twisting songs from Marathon" (1296–97). Herodotus records that Aeschylus' brother Cynegirus, son of Euphorion, lost an arm and died at Marathon (6.114 = *TrGF* 3, T 16). The *Suda* mentions another brother, Ameinias, and gives Euphorion as the name of Aeschylus' father, brother, and

son (*TrGF* 3, T 2).[6] But Herodotus says that Ameinias, a hero of the battle at Salamis, came from Pallene, not Eleusis (8.84). Ameinias appears to have been linked with Aeschylus first by Ephorus (Diod. Sic. 11.27 = *TrGF* 3, T Fc 49), the author of the genealogy that makes Homer and Hesiod cousins (*FGrHist* 70 F 1); it is Ephorus who gives Hesiod's parents the fictive names Dios and Pycimede. Later biographers deduced that Aeschylus himself was a combatant in the famous battles. His *Vita* reports, "They say that he was heroic and that he fought in the battle of Marathon along with his brother Cynegirus, and in the naval battle at Salamis along with his younger brother Ameinias, and also in the infantry battle at Plataea" (*TrGF* 3, T 4). Ion, in his *Visits* (*Epidēmiai*), wrote that Aeschylus fought at Salamis (*FGrHist* 392 F 7 = schol. *Pers.* 429). Ion may have had independent information, but he also might simply have deduced that Aeschylus was present from his vivid description of the battle in the *Persians* (e.g., 432–33).

Although there is no reason to doubt that Aeschylus could have fought during either of the Persian wars, it is also possible that the ancient testimony about his participation may derive from his poetry rather than an independent source. The notion that he fought "heroically" could have been inferred from his characterization in Aristophanes and then strengthened by association with the hero Cynegirus and finally with Ameinias. In popular imagination, he was celebrated for his military service rather than for his poetry.[7] The epitaph preserved in the *Vita* (*TrGF* 3, 1.11 = *FGE* 476–79) makes no reference to what he wrote but claims that "the famous grave of Marathon could tell of his courage and the long-haired Mede knew it well" (25).

The literary history in the *Vita* also was inspired by the characterization of Aeschylus in the *Frogs* and other comedies.[8] There Aristophanes has Aeschylus say, "I brought my songs for a noble purpose from a noble source, so that I would not be seen plucking them from the same holy meadow as [the tragic poet] Phrynichus" (1298–1300). The *Vita* reports more prosaically that "he greatly surpassed his predecessors" (*TrGF* 3, T 1.2).[9] The chorus in the *Frogs* addresses Aeschylus as "you who first built towers of serious (*semna*) speeches and adorned the tragic lyre" (1004–5). The *Vita* emphasizes his innovations in staging, the splendor of his choral productions and costumes, and the seriousness (*semnotēs*) of his choral songs (*TrGF* 3, T 1. 2). In the *Frogs*, Euripides criticizes Aeschylus for the lack of action in his plays (911–13); he accuses him of using "boastful language and driving [the audience] out of their minds" and of "terrifying them" with characters in martial costume (961–66). Aeschylus speaks in his own style with complex compound adjectives (841–42). Accord-

ing to the *Vita*: "In the composition of his poetry he strove for a grand style, by using compound words and epithets, and also metaphors and every other device that could lend weight to his poetry; the plots of his plays do not abound in reversals and complexities like those of later poets, for he aimed solely at investing his characters with dignity; he thought heroic grandeur struck the appropriate archaic note" (*TrGF* 3, T 1. 5–7).

In the *Frogs*, Aristophanes has Aeschylus suggest that Euripides should have been executed (950–51) for putting tragedy on a diet (940–43) by simplifying diction, giving excitement to narratives, and bringing in ordinary people as characters "in a democratic manner" (949–50). Euripides claims that he taught the audience how to use sophistic arguments (959–60) and "how to think, by putting Reasoning in my art and Inquiry" (971–74). A highly condensed version of this comic dialogue emerges in Aeschylus' *Vita*, where Aeschylus is said to have believed that "cunning ingenuity and sententiousness were foreign to tragedy" (1.5). The *Vita* states that "it was for this reason that Aristophanes made fun of him in his comedies," and it describes the scenes with the silent Niobe and Achilles that Euripides makes fun of in the *Frogs*.[10] By the time the *Vita* was compiled, Aristophanes' poetry had become a prose "history," for which the poetry from which it was derived is then cited as confirmation, much as in the case of Solon's poem on Salamis, which was used as both source and evidence that he had delivered an address "before the agora."[11]

In addition to Aristophanes, Aeschylus' later biographers and their excerptors also had access to the anecdotes about poets in the *Visits* by Ion of Chios, a contemporary of Sophocles. Plutarch recounts a conversation between Aeschylus and Ion at the Isthmian games (fr. 104 Leurini = *FGrHist* 392 F 22). Aeschylus is portrayed discussing discipline and courage. Ion also told an anecdote about Sophocles' attempt to seduce a young boy at a dinner party on Chios (*FGrHist* 392 F 6 = *TrGF* 4, T 75); the story shows him to be a more successful strategist in private life than on the battlefield, witty and urbane in social situations. Ion's portrayals fit generally with the characterization of the two poets in the *Frogs*, in which Aristophanes portrays Aeschylus as inspiring the Athenians to fight for their country (1013–14) and describes Sophocles as "easygoing" (*eukolos,* 82). Ion's amusing vignettes are no more likely to be historical than the anecdotes preserved by Aristotle and by Xenophon about the dinner-table repartee of Simonides and Hieron (or Hieron's wife).[12]

In the *Frogs*, Aeschylus wins the contest with Euripides and is brought back to the world of the living by Dionysus, but in the *Vita* he is defeated in con-

tests with other poets and, as a result, leaves Athens and goes to stay in Sicily with Hieron, the tyrant of Syracuse (*TrGF* 3, T A 1.8). According to some biographers cited in the *Vita*, "he was criticized by the Athenians and defeated by Sophocles when the latter was a young man." According to others, he was "defeated by Simonides in an elegy for those who died at Marathon." "Literary history" is cited in confirmation of the judgment in favor of Simonides: "Epigrams in particular need to have the conciseness necessary to arouse emotion, and Aeschylus' poem, as the story goes, was not suitable" (*TrGF* 3, T A 1.8). The idea that Aeschylus' dramas contained "few pathetic scenes or other effects calculated to produce tears" clearly derives not from the plays themselves but from the characterization of his poetry in the *Frogs* as weighty (924–25), long-winded (914–15), and boring (1018), and of his verses as monotonous (1261–62). Defeat in a poetic contest carries special significance in myth. For example, the seer Calchas dies after being defeated by the seer Mopsus (Hes., fr. 278). Homer dies after failing to answer the riddle of the fisherboys. Pindar was said to have been defeated in his native Boeotia by Corinna. Like Aeschylus, Euripides goes into exile after being attacked by the comic poets (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IB 3). In attributing such importance to his defeat by other poets, Aeschylus' biographer(s) also may have been relying on historical inference, assuming that the kind of epigrammatic competitions that took place in the Hellenistic era had analogues in fifth-century Athens.[13]

As if the losses to Sophocles and Simonides were not sufficient explanations for Aeschylus' departure from Athens, the compiler of Aeschylus' *Vita* also records a third reason: "Some say that during the performance of the *Eumenides,* when he brought on the chorus one by one, he so frightened the audience that children fainted and unborn infants were aborted" (*TrGF* 3, T 1.9). The detail about the chorus coming in one by one makes the story sound plausible, but the text of the *Eumenides* suggests that the chorus were already lying asleep on stage at the beginning of the parodos. They begin by rousing each other from sleep: "Wake up; and you wake her up; I'll wake you up" (140).[14] The idea that the Erinyes cause the young to die comes from the drama itself. The chorus sings a song that drives men mad and is "withering to mortals" (328–33). They say, "I have chosen the ruin of houses" (354). They threaten Athens with "canker, blasting leaves and children" and to "cast upon the land infections that destroy its people" (785–87). In the *Frogs* Euripides accuses Aeschylus of saying "terrible things with bogey faces, unfamiliar to his audiences" (925–26).

The notion that the Athenians were dissatisfied with Aeschylus makes his invitation to Gela seem like an exile. Aeschylus' *Suda* biography explic-

itly states that "he went into exile in Sicily because the stage fell down when he was putting on a performance" (Ai 357 = *TrGF* 3, T 2). In reality, however, Hieron's invitation was an indication of Aeschylus' success and international recognition, as it was also for other poets, such as Pindar and Bacchylides. The *Vita* acknowledges that he put on the *Women of Aetna* to celebrate the founding of Aetna (also commemorated in Pindar's *Pythian Ode* 1) and that "he was greatly honored both by Hieron and the people of Gela and lived there for two years before he died" (*TrGF* 3, T 1.10).

The account of Aeschylus' death also marks the poet as extraordinary. He had received an oracle "something thrown from the sky will kill you," and then died after an eagle dropped a tortoise on his head (*TrGF* 3, T 1.10). Certainly the story was invented after the poet's actual death, because if Aristophanes had known about it, he would not have been able to resist using it in the *Frogs* and exploiting its comic potential. Death as a result of a misunderstood oracle is characteristic of other famous poets. Hesiod avoided the famous grove of Nemean Zeus in order to die in Nemean Locri; Homer did not heed the oracle's warning that he would die in Ios and to beware of a riddle posed by young men. As in the case of the other poets' deaths, the setting of Aeschylus' death has an inverse relation to his poetry: he is killed by a tortoise, the animal whose shell is used to make a lyre. Hesiod wrote the *Theogony* in praise of Zeus (in whose sacred grove he died); Homer was alleged to be the wisest of all Greeks. In an analogous way, Tiresias' prediction to Odysseus, "death will come to you from the sea" (*Od*. 11.134–36), became in cyclic epic an account of how Odysseus' son Telegonus killed him with the barb of a sting-ray, which he was using instead of a spear (schol. *Od*. 11.134).[15]

Modern scholars have suggested that the anecdote about Aeschylus' death might have been inspired by Teiresias' prophecy to Odysseus in Aeschylus' *Psychagogoi* (*TrGF* 3, F 275): "A heron flying overhead shall strike you with dung, the releasings of its stomach, and a spine from this sea grazer shall rot your aged brow, with its thinning hair."[16] But the emphasis on the sea is more appropriate for Odysseus than it is for Aeschylus. The extraordinary nature of Aeschylus' death illustrates the power of the gods. The fifth-century philosopher Democritus used the same incident (a bald man's head being broken by a tortoise dropped by an eagle) as an example of random luck (*tychē*, 68 A 68, II 101 DK = *TrGF* 3, T M, p. 64),[17] but most people would have interpreted the incident as an example of divine intervention. The lyre is the trademark of the poet; the sounding boards of lyres were made from tortoise shells.[18] The eagle is the bird of Zeus, and no poet celebrated that god's powers more extensively

than Aeschylus.[19] A verse commemorating his extraordinary death was said to have been inscribed on his tomb: "I died, struck on the brow from an eagle's claws" (*TrGF* 3, T 1.17). The citizens of Gela, where he died, gave him a public burial and heroic honors; people involved in the theater offered sacrifices at his tomb.

By suggesting that Aeschylus went to Gela because the Athenians were dissatisfied with him, the *Vita* leaves the impression that Aeschylus received greater honor after his death than during his lifetime (*TrGF* 3, T 1.11). The people of Gela "buried him richly" and "honored him extravagantly" with the epigram about that pays tribute to his service at Marathon: "All who made their living in the tragic theater went to his tomb to offer sacrifices and recited their plays there. The Athenians liked Aeschylus so much that they voted after his death to award a golden crown to whoever was willing to put on one of his dramas."[20] Homer was buried by the people of Ios and honored with an epigram (*Vit. Hdt.* 36). Hesiod's innocence was recognized after his death and his bones moved to Orchomenos. After the difficulties in their lifetimes, the posthumous honors (real or imaginary) were designed to give these poets heroic stature.

The list of discoveries attributed to Aeschylus in the *Vita* also seems to derive from comedy.[21] The phrase "highly heroic effects" (*pathesi gennikotatois* 3.6) derives from Aeschylus' claim in the *Frogs* that his dramas the *Seven* and the *Persae* made the citizens "heroic" (*gennaious,* 1017). Chamaeleon's claim (fr. 41 Wehrli = *TrGF* 3, T 103) that Aeschylus first created choreography (*prōton schēmatisai*) has an analogue in the lines given to the poet in a lost play of Aristophanes: "I myself made the arrangements [*schēmata epoioun*] for choruses" (fr. 696.1 KA, *PCG* III.2, pp. 357–58). "Altars, tombs, trumpets, ghosts, and Erinyes" (*TrGF* 3, T 1.14), the special stage effects and scenery listed in the *Vita*, are mentioned in the text of his dramas (altars and tombs, *Choephoroe.* 160; trumpets, *Eum.* 568 and *Ran.* 1041; Erinyes, *Eum.* 46–56).[22] Aristotle in the *Poetics* says that Aeschylus was the first to use two actors, but he attributes the invention of the third actor and of scenery to Sophocles (1449a 15 = *TrGF* 3, T 100). The *Vita* (fr. 76 Wehrli) gives the actors' names, Cleander and Mynniscus, but then states that he "invented the third actor, though Dicaearchus of Messene (fr. 100 Mirhady = fr. 76 Wehrli = *TrGF* 4, T 78) says it was Sophocles." Presumably Dicaearchus got this information from his teacher Aristotle, but ultimately all of this "data" could easily have been deduced from the texts of the plays. In the *Persae* (472 B.C.), Aeschylus uses two actors, but in the *Seven against Thebes* (467 B.C.) and the *Oresteia* (458 B.C.) he uses three.[23]

By that time, Aeschylus could have learned the technique from Sophocles. Aeschylus may have been the first to equip the actors with gloves and robes and higher buskins (e.g., *TrGF* 3, T 103), but it is also possible that these discoveries were imputed to him by later critics primarily because he was considered the first major dramatist.

Unfortunately, there is no longer enough information available to enable us precisely to trace how Aeschylus' biography developed over time, from its origins in comedy to its final form in Aeschylus' *Vita*.[24] Whatever exactly it was, apparently it contained a comparative assessment of the poet's work and an emphasis on the more extreme and eccentric characteristics of his talent. Of his technical skill, his interests, his understanding of human experience we hear nothing, because these were not subjects for comedy. The narrative of Aeschylus' life preserved in his *Vita* is necessarily episodic, because it is based on the utterances of various comic characters, without a chronological framework. To the extent that it has a shape, the *Vita* follows the mythological pattern of success followed by exile and a notable death that signifies divine connections, while at the same time demonstrating that, like other mortals, he was weak and fallible. The *Vita* acknowledges that he was beloved by the Athenians and regarded as a hero after his death, but because of the limited range of its sources, it cannot help us understand why and how Aeschylus became so great a poet or better appreciate the importance of his achievement.

Sophocles

The compiler of the *Life of Sophocles* appears to have had access to several biographies from which to draw his information.[1] From these he selected data with some discrimination, discarding information that ran contrary to common sense. In his discussion of Sophocles' origins (*TrGF* 4, T 1.1) he declares that Aristoxenus was wrong when he called Sophocles' father, Sophillus, a carpenter (fr. 115 Wehrli) and that Ister was mistaken when he said that Sophillus was a bronze-smith or swordmaker (*FGrHist* 334 F 33). The compiler had reasoned that a man who was descended from a tradesman would not have held a generalship "along with Pericles and Thucydides, who were the most important men in the city." He also says that Ister is mistaken to suppose that Sophocles was born in Phlius in the northern Peloponnesus (*FGrHist* 334 F 34), because the information is to be found only in Ister.[2] So he concluded that Sophocles was an Athenian by birth, from a good family. But the compiler does not cite Ion of Chios, Sophocles' contemporary, who says that Sophocles behaved like "any other Athenian aristocrat" (*TrGF* 4, T 75.32 = *FGrHist* 392 F 6), nor did he add that Sophocles must have come from a leading family since he participated (as he says later) in Athenian cult.

But even though the compiler distinguishes between sensible and fanciful (or likely and less likely) information, he does not ask about the sources on which Aristoxenus and Ister might have drawn, such as comedy, but rather relies on common sense.[3] He observes that "indeed if [Sophocles'] father had been a tradesman, he would not have got off without abuse from the comic poets."[4] The fourth-century historian Philochorus also denied the comic poets'

allegations that Euripides' mother was a vegetable seller: "Actually both his parents were well-born" (*FGrHist* 328 F 218). Like the compiler of Sophocles' *Vita*, Philochorus might have deduced this information not from genealogical research but from accounts of Euripides' service as a torchbearer in the rites of Apollo (*TrGF* 5.1, T A.1 IA.5).

Sophocles' biographer concludes his discussion of the poet's origins by reaffirming that he was an Athenian from the deme of Colonus: "He was distinguished both because of his life and his poetry. He was well-educated and raised in comfortable circumstances, and he was involved in government and in embassies abroad." The biographer gives no details, but there is independent confirmation that Sophocles came from Colonus and held public office. An inscription records that "[S]ophocles [from] Colo[nus]" was state treasurer in 443/2 B.C. (*TrGF* 4, T 18). Also, according to the fourth-century historian Androtion, he was one of the ten generals in the Samian war of 441/0 (*TrGF* 4, T 19 = *FGrHist* 324 F 38).[5] In 411 B.C. Sophocles was one of the old men appointed as the commissioners (*probouloi*) who decided to put the government of Athens in the hands of the oligarchic Four Hundred (*TrGF* 4, T 27). The compiler of the *Vita* continues by giving Sophocles' date of birth as 495/4 B.C., making him seven years younger than Aeschylus and about fifteen years older than Euripides (*TrGF* 4, T 1.2). He then describes the achievements of his youth (*TrGF* 4, T 1.3), without questioning Ister or his other sources when their information appears to be plausible: "He trained with the other boys both in wrestling and in music, and won crowns for both, as Ister says" (*FGrHist* 334 F 35). "He studied music with Lamprus, and after the naval battle at Salamis [in 480, when Sophocles was fifteen], when the Athenians were standing round the victory monument, Sophocles with his lyre, naked and anointed with oil, led the chorus which sang the paean at the victory sacrifice."[6] These anecdotes demonstrate that the poet's talent was evident when he was very young. As in Pindar's case, early recognition helps account for extraordinary productivity over a long period of time—in both cases, almost half a century.

The biographer now provides information about Sophocles' place in the history of tragedy (*TrGF* 4, T 1.4). This information must have come from sources different from those he cites earlier in the biography, because it is hard to see how Sophocles could have "learned about tragedy from Aeschylus" if Aeschylus had been only seven years his senior. The biography attributes to Sophocles many innovations. The first is that "he broke the tradition of the poet's acting because his own voice was weak—in the old days the poet himself served as one of the actors" (*TrGF* 4, T 1.4).[7] The biographer adds that

the only time Sophocles ever sang was when he played the leading role in his *Thamyris*.[8] In confirmation of this claim, he states, "[T]here is a picture of him playing a lyre in the Painted Stoa" (*TrGF* 4, T 1.5).[9] The idea that Sophocles had a weak voice sounds plausible, but it may well have been invented to explain why he chose to use a third actor. An ancient commentator explains that when the speaker of Pindar's *Olympian Ode* 6 instructs a certain Aeneas to rouse his comrades to sing (*Ol.* 6.87–89), "Aeneas was the chorus-leader. [Pindar] used him because of his own weak voice and because of not being able to recite the choruses himself, as most poets did for themselves when they competed" (schol. *Ol.* 6.149a, 188).

Other innovations that the biographer attributes to Sophocles are the increase in the size of the chorus from twelve to fifteen and the invention of the third actor. He does not cite a source for this information, though attribution to Sophocles of the third actor might have come from Aristotle (*Poet.* 1449a 15 = *TrGF* 4, T 95) or from Dicaearchus of Messene (fr. 100 Mirhady = fr. 76 Wehrli). Sophocles' biographer does not mention the possibility that the third actor was invented by Aeschylus, as Aeschylus' biographer claimed (*TrGF* 3, T 1.15). But the author of Sophocles' *Vita* does list his sources for information about the poet's other innovations (*TrGF* 4, T 1.16): "Satyrus says that Sophocles invented the crooked staff himself" (F 3 Schorn); "Ister also says [*FGrHist* 334 F 36] that he discovered the white half-boots that actors and chorus members wear, and that he wrote his dramas to suit their characters, and that he organized a *thiasos* to the Muses of cultivated people." The idea that Sophocles organized a *thiasos* of cultivated people could be based on historical fact; a fifth-century inscription records the seating plan of a *thiasos* to which the poet Aristophanes belonged, with three men he mentions in his comedies.[10] But since ancient biographers appear rarely to have consulted anything other than literary documents, it is also possible that the notion of Sophocles' *thiasos* derives from a representation in comedy or in a dialogue which, like Plato's *Symposium*, describes the gathering (and seating arrangement) of learned friends at the home of the tragic poet Agathon.[11] His biographer does not mention the information recorded by Plutarch (*An Seni* 785b) that in 441/40 Sophocles composed an epigram for the historian Herodotus (*FGE* 1044–45 = *TrGF* 4 T 163 = fr. 5 W). Passages in two of Sophocles' dramas suggest that he may have been acquainted with the historian's work.[12] The next statement about Sophocles in the *Vita* comes directly from comedy: "In a word his character was so charming that he was loved everywhere and by everyone" (*TrGF* 4, T 1.7). Aristophanes in the *Frogs* characterized Sophocles as "easy-going (*eukolos*) here [i.e.,

in this world] and easy-going there [in Hades]" (82 = *TrGF* 4, T101). In the play, one of Hades' servants describes Sophocles as readily yielding first place to Aeschylus: "He kissed Aeschylus, when he came down here, and grasped his right hand, and he stood back from the Chair" (788–90) (*TrGF* 4, T 101, 102).[13] According to Phrynichus, Sophocles "lived for many years and died a happy man and clever, after writing many good tragedies he died well, without having suffered any impairment" (*TrGF* 4, T 105 = fr. 32 KA, *PCG* VII, p. 409). Ion of Chios describes how Sophocles contrived without using force to get a young boy to kiss him, while carrying on a witty conversation (*TrGF* 4, T 75 = *FGrHist* 392 F 6). The characterization of Sophocles as socially adept may have some foundation in fact (Sophocles was repeatedly elected to public office). But the notion of charm and ease may also reflect ancient assessments of his style, a characterization that places Sophocles midway in a linear progression between Aeschylus' rough archaism and Euripides' smooth sophistry.

To support the statement that Sophocles was loved by everyone, his biographer adds that (1) "he won twenty victories, according to Carystius; (2) he often won second prize, but never third" (*TrGF* 4, T 1.8 = *FHG* 4,359 F 18); (3) the Athenians elected him general when he was sixty-five years old, seven years before the start of the Peloponnesian war (431/0);[14] (4) "he was so loyal to Athens that when many kings sent for him he did not want to leave his country" (*TrGF* 4, T 9–11). The information about Sophocles' victories could have been derived from victor lists, but the story about his generalship in old age may be apocryphal. Ion (*FGrHist* 392 F 6) and Androtion (*FGrHist* 324 F 38) mention only his service in the Samian war of 441/0. As Plutarch tells the story about his second generalship in the *Life of Nicias* (15.2), it sounds as if it were an anecdote designed to create a conversation between these two famous generals (*TrGF* 4, T 26). Here, as in Ion's story about Sophocles' strategic behavior at the symposium in Chios (*TrGF* 4, T 75 = *FGrHist* 392 F 6), Sophocles displays both tact and linguistic agility. The story about Sophocles' loyalty to Athens may have been designed to contrast him with Aeschylus, who was believed to have left Athens to go to Hieron, king of Syracuse, and Euripides, who was believed to have gone to the court of Archelaus, king of Macedon (e.g., *TrGF* 5.1, T A.1.1, A.6; IB.3). Another possible source of the compliment is comedy: Aristophanes boasts that the king of Persia wanted to know whom Aristophanes was criticizing in his poetry because his advice was so good (*Ach.* 646–51). The joke was taken seriously by Aristophanes' biographer (T 1, 41–42 KA).[15] Since the compiler of Sophocles' *Vita* wishes to present a favorable picture of the poet, he does not mention Aristophanes' claim in his comedy *Peace* (421) that

Sophocles had turned into Simonides because he was "old and debauched and ready to go to sea on a raft in order to make money" (697).[16]

After the anecdotes about Sophocles' political status, his biographer provides two illustrations of his piety: (1) he held the priesthood of the hero Halon (maintained after his death by his son Iophon; *TrGF* 4, T 1.11); (2) according to Hieronymus (fr. 31 Wehrli), he established a shrine to Heracles Informer, as a result of a dream in which Heracles told him where to find a golden crown that had been stolen from the Acropolis (*TrGF* 4, T 1.12).[17] Sophocles used the reward for finding the crown to build the shrine. That he held the priesthood of Halon is unattested elsewhere;[18] the biographer identifies him as "a hero under Chiron's tutelage along with Asclepius." Like Aristodemus' story of Pindar and the cult of Demeter, the anecdotes about Sophocles appear to represent the quasi-heroic status accorded to the poet in the Hellenistic period and after. Sophocles is also said to have written a paean for Asclepius (*TrGF* 4, T 73a = *PMG* 737). Was the story about his priesthood created to explain an account of an epiphany, like the stories about Pindar's *Hymn to Demeter*? Was the story about his establishing the shrine of Heracles Informer also intended to explain the existence of a particular poem, like the stories about Pindar's *Hymns* to Pan and Ammon?

In Sophocles' drama *Oedipus at Colonus*, the old Oedipus curses his son Polynices, who tries to compel him to return to Thebes. This scene may have provided the inspiration for the next anecdote in the *Vita*, which tells how Sophocles quarreled with his son, the dramatist Iophon (*TrGF* 4, T 1.13): "The story is told by many authorities that at some point (*pote*) he brought a lawsuit against his son Iophon. Iophon was his son by Nicostrate, but he had a son Ariston by Theoris of Sicyon, and he was especially fond of this son's child, whose name was Sophocles. Once in a drama [a name is missing here] portrayed Iophon as being envious of him and as making accusations to the members of his phratry that his father had become senile in his old age. They censured Iophon. Satyrus (F 4 Schorn) says the poet said: 'If I am Sophocles I'm not senile, if I am senile, I'm not Sophocles,' and then he recited the *Oedipus* [*at Colonus*]." The symmetry of Sophocles' response suggests deliberate contrivance; biographers needed to account for extraordinary competence in old age.[19] Although the narrative could have been inspired by an historical incident, it seems more likely that the source of Satyrus' anecdote about Sophocles and Iophon was a comedy (now lost) about Sophocles' family.[20] The subject of the dispute, distribution of attention or affection, is a parody of real-life litigation among stepchildren over distribution of property. The

anecdote preserves the names of the characters: Sophocles, Iophon, his son by his wife Nicostrate; Ariston, his son by Theoris of Sicyon (who must have been a concubine because she was not an Athenian) and Ariston's son Sophocles, who was also a tragic poet (*Suda*, Sigma 816 = *TrGF* 1 62 T 1) and who, after his grandfather's death, produced the *Oedipus at Colonus* in 401 B.C. (*TrGF* 1, 62 T 4; *TrGF* 4, T 41). The statements "in a drama . . . portrayed his son Iophon as being envious," "he made accusations before the members of his phratry," and "Sophocles recited the *Oedipus* [*at Colonus*]" suggest the setting of at least two of its scenes, as does Plutarch's version of the story, in which Sophocles read the *parodos* of the drama out loud and was escorted from the court as if from a theater, to the applause of all those present (*An Seni* 785ab = *TrGF* 4, T 82).

After the anecdote about Sophocles as an old man, his biographer provides three different accounts of his death, without judging which is the most likely (*TrGF* 4, T 1.14): (1) according to Ister (*FGrHist* 334 F 37) and to Neanthes (*FGrHist* 84 F 18), Sophocles choked on an unripe grape at the festival of the Choes; (2) he lost his voice (and breath) while reading the *Antigone*; (3) after the drama had been recited, he died of joy when he was declared the victor. Each of these deaths is appropriate for a poet, but at the same time degrading. The story about the grape connects him with Dionysus; according to Ion of Chios, "he used to say and do many things cleverly when he was drinking" (*TrGF* 4, T 75 = *FGrHist* 392 F 6); the poet Anacreon was said to have choked on a grape-pit. The story that Sophocles choked while reading the *Antigone* is attributed to Satyrus (F 5 Schorn); as in the case of the story of Euripides and the women and the tale of Sophocles' quarrel with Iophon, Satyrus likes to connect events in the poets' lives with their art. It is interesting that two anecdotes appear to place the *Antigone* at the end of his life, in 406/5 B.C.: the stories that he lost his breath while reading the drama and that he died of joy when it was awarded first prize. The hypothesis to Sophocles' *Antigone* dates the production much earlier in Sophocles' life: "Some say that Sophocles was judged worthy of the generalship in the campaign against Samos [440/1 B.C.], because of the high reputation he had won from having put on the *Antigone*" (*TrGF* 4, T 25 = *Ant. Arg.* 1.15 Pearson).[21] If biographers had discovered the earlier date of the play from chronological information in Callimachus' *Catalogues* (*Pinakes*), why did Satyrus connect it with an event some forty years later? The coexistence of these stories suggests that in the third century there was no fixed information available about the date of the *Antigone*.[22] It is conceivable that Sophocles wrote some portion of the *Antigone* as commentary on a particular event; one of the Athenian generals in the Samian revolt was

named Creon.[23] But in practice, fifth-century dramas appear to offer general warnings rather than to respond to specific political situations. Aeschylus' *Persians,* produced eight years after the defeat of the Persian navy at Salamis, portrayed the dangers of *hybris;* Herodotus finished his books about the defeat of the Persians as Athens was developing her own empire.[24] Euripides' *Trojan Women* was produced in 415, the year when Athens put down the Melian rebellion and prepared her expedition against Sicily, but the general issue of how to deal with dissident allies had already been raised by the Mytilenean revolt of 427, at the very beginning of the Peloponnesian war. Sophocles' service as Hellenotamias in 443/2 and as general in the war against the Anaeans ca. 438 need not have had any more direct bearing on his poetry than Aeschylus' military service in the Persian wars.[25]

After the stories of the poet's death, the biographer provides a description of his tomb (*TrGF* 4, T 1.15), including its location (eleven stades from the city wall) and decoration (either a siren or a "Charmer" [*Kēlēdon*]).[26] He then explains how Sophocles could be buried outside of the city during wartime, even when the city was being besieged by the Spartans: The god Dionysus appeared to the Spartan general Lysander in a dream, ordering him to allow the burial. When Lysander disregarded the dream, the god appeared a second time, and Lysander announced a truce. After this account of divine recognition the biographer quotes an epigram testifying to Sophocles' piety that (according to the poet Lobon of Argos) was inscribed on his tomb: "In this tomb I hide Sophocles who won first place with his art, a most holy figure" (*TrGF* 4, T.1.16). That the biographer can give precise details about the location and appearance of Sophocles' tomb indicates that in late antiquity a tomb was identified as Sophocles' and pointed out to tourists. Lobon's epitaph would have been composed at least a hundred years after Sophocles' death.[27]

The biographer adds a final anecdote from Ister about Sophocles' hero cult: "The Athenians voted to sacrifice to him each year because of his excellence" (*FGrHist* 334 F 38). By the Hellenistic age, Sophocles had attained heroic status, like Homer in Argos, Archilochus in Paros, Stesichorus in Catana, and Aeschylus in Gela. The biographer does not include the information given in several ancient etymological dictionaries that Sophocles himself was later worshipped as the hero Dexion, because of his receipt (*dexis*) of the cult of Asclepius (*TrGF* 4, T 69).[28] The association of Dexion with Sophocles is probably a later invention, based on the assumption that Dexion means "receiver";[29] but in fact, it is more likely that the name connotes the healing power of the right hand (*dexia*).[30] A hero named Dexion is mentioned in inscriptions of the

fourth century B.C. (*TrGF* 4, T 70–71), though without specific reference to Sophocles.[31] Ordinarily, adult heroes were worshipped under their own names and did not acquire new identities in cult.[32] The idea that Sophocles received Asclepius (*TrGF* 4, T 67, 68) may have been derived from the paean Sophocles composed for the god, as in the case of the story about Pindar's dream and his hymn to Demeter (*Vit. Pind. Amb.* p. 2.6–10 Dr).[33]

As in Aeschylus' biography, the account of the Sophocles' tomb and hero cult is followed by a general assessment of his achievement as a poet. The biographer gives statistics of his accomplishments, the number of dramas he wrote, and the names of some of his more famous competitors (*TrGF* 4, T 1.18–19). The source of this information is likely to have been Aristotle's *didaskaliai,* which preserved the names (though not always the titles) of the competitors in most years.[34] The biographer then provides a description of his style (*TrGF* 4, T 1.20). The examples are different from those given at the beginning of the *Vita* but no less simplified in character. There is a discussion of Sophocles' debt to Homer (especially to the *Odyssey*) for his plots. Like Homer, he derives Odysseus' name from the verb "to be angry" (*odyssomai*). "He delineated character, elaborated and used contrivances skillfully reproducing Homer's charm. For this reason a certain Ionian says that only Sophocles is a pupil of Homer," which the compiler of the *Vita* rightly understands to be a metaphorical statement about Sophocles' *poetry.* But the biographer makes it clear that Sophocles was not merely an imitator but a poet who was capable of adopting the best characteristics from all his predecessors. "For this reason he was called 'the bee.'"[35] "He brought everything together: timing, sweetness, courage, variety. He knew how to match timing and events, so that he could delineate a whole character from a fraction of a line or from a single speech. This is the greatest mark of poetic skill, to delineate character or effect" (*TrGF* 4, T 1.20–21).

The biographer concludes his account of Sophocles' life with two more quotations from Aristophanes, as if to reinforce the idea that Sophocles was known as "the bee": that "a honeycomb sat on him" (fr. 679 KA, *PCG* III.2, p. 349) and that his mouth was anointed with honey (*TrGF* 4, T108 = fr. 598 KA, *PCG* III.2, p. 319). He closes the *Vita* with a brief note about Sophocles' innovations in music, drawn from Aristoxenus in his *History of Music* (fr. 79 Wehrli = *TrGF* 4, T 1.23).

Although the biography of Sophocles follows an expository pattern similar to that of the Aeschylus *Vita*, with a narrative sketch of his life and an assessment of his success as a dramatist, the author of the Sophocles *Vita* exercises

more critical judgment in the use of his sources. He consciously avoids taking the comic poets' allegations too seriously or literally. When faced with conflicting evidence, he opts for the more plausible account, as in the case of the erroneous claims about Sophocles' foreign birth and nonaristocratic parentage. He appears to have exercised independent judgment in claiming that Aeschylus used three actors, a deduction that he or his source could have made by examining the text of Aeschylus' plays. In cases where the compiler of the Sophocles *Vita* cannot decide which of a number of possibilities is the most plausible, he leaves his readers to decide among them, as when he presents several different accounts of Sophocles' death. He does not hesitate to praise the poet's accomplishment, and he attempts to explain why he thinks Sophocles was such a skillful writer. If only we could know what sources were available to him, whenever and wherever he compiled his biography! Had he read Ister and Satyrus in their original form, or from versions already condensed by an earlier biographer? One suspects the latter. But no one who read his *Vita* could fail to realize that Sophocles was an important writer, if not the greatest of all the famous tragedians.

Euripides

Euripides' biography is of particular interest, because we can trace the course of its development, at least in part. Euripides was a character in fifth-century comedies, and anecdotes about him were known to Philochorus in the fourth century. We have extensive fragments of a dialogue, the *Life of Euripides*, by the second-century B.C. biographer Satyrus of Callatis. Because it is easier to see what can be learned from such fragments when they are placed in a narrative context, for the reader's convenience I shall begin with the *Vita* that is preserved in the manuscripts, which is still the principal source of information about Euripides' life, even though we do not know exactly when or by whom it was compiled.[1]

The *Vita* offers an account of the poet's life (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA), followed by another version of his life (IB), and then the story of his death (II). This section is followed by an assessment of his character (III) and further anecdotes (IV). Duplication and inconsistency in the narrative indicate that the *Vita* underwent a long and deteriorative process of condensation. I shall discuss wherever possible what use the author(s) of the *Vita* made of earlier sources and then, in conclusion, say something about the original form of those sources, with particular attention to Satyrus.[2] Close analysis again shows that most of the original source material for the *Vita* was comedy or Euripides' own dramas. As time went on, the negative aspects of the anecdotes gradually received more emphasis, and, as a result, the poet and his achievement became more comprehensible and accessible to a wider and increasingly diverse and distant audience.

The first section of the *Vita* (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA) offers a chronological account of the poet's life, following a pattern not dissimilar to that of the *Vitae* of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Its author (whom I shall call Biographer IA) first gives the names of Euripides' parents and his birthplace and date. Then he reports that Euripides' father, Mnesarchides, was a storekeeper and his mother, Cleito, a vegetable-seller, without questioning the veracity of that information. Here he shows less critical judgment than the author of the next section of the *Vita* (Biographer IB), who refers to "the writers of Old Comedy who made fun of him in their plays by calling him the son of a woman who sold vegetables" (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1, IB.1). Aristophanes liked the joke, which occurs four times in his extant comedies (*Ach.* 478; *Eq.* 19; *Ran.* 840, 947; *Thesm.* 387 = *TrGF* 5.1, T. 24–29).[3] In the *Acharnians*, Dicaearchus asks Euripides to give him "the chervil (*skandika*) he received from his mother;" chervil was the kind of green that poor people would have eaten.[4] Philochorus in the fourth century B.C. knew that the vegetable-seller story was unhistorical (*FGrHist* 328 F 218 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 3.1). Euripides' father Mnesarchides is not mentioned in any surviving comedy or fragment, but the notion that he was a storekeeper is no more likely to be historical than the idea that his wife sold vegetables. In contrast to Euripides' Biographer IA, the author of the Sophocles *Vita* doubted the accuracy of stories that the poet's father, Sophillus, was a carpenter or a bronze-smith, because if he had come from such humble origins Sophocles would not have been elected general alongside Pericles and Thucydides (*TrGF* 4, T A.1.1).

Biographer IA says that Euripides was born in 480 B.C., the year of the battle of Salamis, and then describes Euripides' early years. His father had learned from an oracle that his son "would win at contests in which crowns were awarded," so Euripides was first trained to become an athlete, and may have won a victory in games held in Athens (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA.2). The story is an indication both of divine recognition and of versatility, themes which often occur in the Lives of ancient writers. The boy Sophocles won victories in wrestling and music (*TrGF* 4, T A.1.3). Plato was said to have been a wrestler, painter, and poet; Socrates was said to have been a sculptor (Diog. Laert. 2.19; Paus. 1.22.8).[5] But Euripides' father, like most mortals, had misunderstood the oracle. In time, Euripides himself realized its true significance: "Once [Euripides] understood the oracle's meaning he turned to writing tragedy."

The biographer does not explain how Euripides learned to write verse or music, but instead calls attention to contemporary influences on his work: "He introduced many innovations, prologues, philosophical discourses, displays of rhetoric and recognition scenes, because he attended lectures by Anaxagoras,

Prodicus and Protagoras and was a friend of Socrates" (*TrGF* 5.1 T.1 IA.2). The idea that Euripides was influenced by Socrates comes straight from Athenian comedy. Aristophanes has the chorus of the *Frogs* complain that Euripides "sits beside Socrates all day talking, forgetting about music and the most important aspects of tragic art" (*Ran*. 1491–95 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 42). Later writers searched Euripides' dramas for "Socratic" passages. In Satyrus' dialogue about the life of Euripides, an interlocutor supposes that a passage from the *Danae* refers to Socrates, who was exempt from avarice (F 6 fr. 38 iv).[6] An interlocutor quotes from another play lines about the gods that another interlocutor judges to be "Socratic" (F 6 fr. 39ii = *TrGF* 5.2, fr. 1007c).

So far as we now know, Aristophanes and the other comic poets do not seem to have said anything about the influence on Euripides of Anaxagoras, Prodicus, or Protagoras, but in Hellenistic literature, Euripides was associated with each of them, because all had been accused of impiety. (I shall say more about those accusations when I discuss the account of Euripides' death in section II of the *Vita*.) In the Hellenistic era, it had become almost proverbial that Euripides studied with Anaxagoras, but the association was based on superficial verbal coincidences, all having to do with language. One of the interlocutors in Satyrus' dialogue about the life of Euripides (F 6 fr. 37 iii) cites a passage from a lost play where the speaker brings an offering to "Zeus, or, if you prefer to be called Hades" (*TrGF* 5.1, F 912) and then observes: "[Euripides] has caught with complete accuracy Anaxagoras' world-view (*ton Anaxagoreion diakosmon*) in three phrases." The interlocutor then adds: "And elsewhere [Euripides] is uncertain about the established order in heavenly affairs," citing as "proof" the lines from the *Trojan Women* where Hecuba prays: "Zeus or necessity of nature or the mind of men" (886).[7] Even though the other interlocutors in Satyrus' dialogue express some doubt about these assertions, later biographers accepted them as established fact. Commentators quoted in the ancient scholia on this passage stated that "these lines derive from the sayings (*logoi*) of Anaxagoras, citing another Euripidean line, "in each of us our mind is god" (*TrGF* 5.2, F 1018).[8] According to Diogenes Laertius, "at the beginning of his book Anaxagoras said 'all things were together; then Mind (*Nous*) came and put them in order'" (2.6, cf. 59 B1 DK).[9]

In later commentaries, any reference to a heavenly body was enough to suggest the influence of Anaxagoras. In the *Orestes*, when Electra wishes that she could go to the "rock set between heaven and earth . . . a clod (*bōlos*) of earth from Olympus, borne on golden chains" (982–85), one scholion reads "since Euripides was a pupil of Anaxagoras, he says that the sun is a lump of molten

metal (*mydros*), for thus Anaxagoras taught." The ancient commentator(s) were thinking of Anaxagoras' dictum that "the sun is a fiery *mydros* and is larger than the Peloponnesus" (59 A 1 DK = Diog. Laert. 2.8).[10] Commentators found evidence of philosophical speculation in a reference to "investigation of things in the middle of the air (*ta meteora*)," which was one of the charges brought against Socrates in his trial for impiety (Pl., *Apol*. 18b). When the chorus in the *Alcestis* sings: "I have soared aloft (*metarsios*) and having looked into many theories have found nothing so strong as necessity" (962–66), a commentator explained, "the poet through the persona of the chorus indicates what sort of education he has had: 'I have thought about things in the air (*ta meteora*), have studied astronomy, and have devoted myself to this.'"[11]

After discussing sophistic influences on Euripides, Biographer IA claims that other writers helped Euripides write his plays (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA.3). He quotes lines from the fifth-century comic poet Teleclides (fr. 41 KA, *PCG* VII, 683) stating that Euripides collaborated with Socrates and his own uncle Mnesilochus.[12] He adds that some say that Iophon or Timocrates of Argos wrote his lyrics. All of these allegations are likely to have originated in comedies that called attention to supposed similarities in style or subject matter. In his biography of Socrates, Diogenes Laertius (2.18) quotes the same lines about collaboration with Socrates and Mnesilochus and follows this quotation with a line from Teleclides, "Euripideses [plural] nailed together by Socrates" (fr. 42 KA, *PCG* VII, 684). Diogenes also cites a passage from Aristophanes' first *Clouds*: "[Socrates] is the one who composes those hyper-wordy plays for Euripides, the clever ones" (fr. 392 KA, *PCG* IIIA, 316–17).[13]

After this assessment of Euripides' poetry, Biographer IA observes that Euripides was also an artist, whose pictures were shown at Megara (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA.4). Here one suspects the attribution to Euripides was "discovered" by some enterprising Megarians sometime after the poet's lifetime. The biographer then adds (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA.5) that Euripides acted as a torchbearer in the rites of Apollo at Cape Zoster; this information could have been gleaned from an honorific inscription put up by an Athenian deme.[14] According to the fourth-century polymath Theophrastus, Euripides was involved in another ritual in honor of Apollo at Athens, pouring wine for the dancers, who came from among the first families in Athens (Ath. x.424e = *TrGF* 5.1, T 33b).

Following this information about Euripides' service to Apollo, Biographer IA observes that Euripides was born on the day of the battle of Salamis in 480 B.C., as was the historian Hellanicus, whose name literally means "Greek" (thus predicting the Greek victory). The coincidence is possible, but not

likely: in the chronology on the Marmor Parium, Euripides' birth date is given as 485/4 B.C. (*FGrHist* 239 A 50 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 10a), and in other sources a year or so earlier (e.g., *TrGF* 5.1, T 15a, 17a).[15] But here apparently the biographer was following a source that offered chronological information, because he adds that Euripides first entered tragedy competitions when he was twenty-six (454 B.C.).

After this information about Euripides' life in Attica, Biographer IA tells us about his accomplishments elsewhere (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA.6). The poet emigrated to Magnesia in Asia Minor, where he was awarded the status of a public friend of the state (*proxenia*). That information could have been found on a commemorative inscription in Magnesia.[16] But it might also derive from a literal interpretation of a metaphorical expression of friendship or a passage praising that city.[17] The biographer does not say why he left Athens. Nor does he explain why the poet then went on to Macedonia, although the writer of another section of the *Vita* says it was because of his unpopularity with the Athenians (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IB.3). While in Macedonia, Euripides wrote the play *Archelaus* for its king, who was also called Archelaus. Euripides was well treated there and became a financial administrator.

Biographer IA continues with details about Euripides' personal appearance and his family. He had a long beard and moles on his face (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA.7), information that comes from comedy. In Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*, Euripides says, "I'm grey-haired and have a beard" (190); Dionysus in the *Frogs* talks about the sties on Euripides' eyes (1246). After giving the names of Euripides' two wives and three sons, and his sons' professions, the biographer offers a summary account of Euripides' career (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA.8), presumably using a different source from the one he cited earlier in his narrative (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA.5), which gave the date of his first competition as two years earlier.

Biographer IA concludes with a brief account of Euripides' death and the tributes he received from other poets. The biographer gives two historians' opinions about how old the poet was when he died though without attempting to explain why they should differ: over seventy years old (Philochorus *FGrHist* 328 F 220), and seventy-five (Eratosthenes *FGrHist* 241 F 12). Biographer IA then adds that Euripides was buried in Macedonia. He makes no reference to the sensational accounts of the poet's demise reported by Satyrus and by the other author(s) of the *Vita*. He observes that the poet had a cenotaph in Athens, and he quotes an epigram that explains that Euripides was buried in Macedonia. Presumably no one knew who wrote the epigram, so it was attributed to one of Euripides' famous contemporaries, either Thucydides the

historian or the poet Timotheus (*FGE* 1052–55 = *Anth. Pal.* 7.45).[18] Having two tombs is a sign of heroic status.[19] At the Macedonian tomb there were said to be two springs, one sustaining, the other destructive, as at the hero Trophonius' shrine in Lebadeia.[20] Hellenistic epigrams locate his Macedonian tomb both at Pella (*TrGF* 5.1, T 234 = *Anth. Pal.* 7.44.5–6; T.237 = *Anth. Pal.* 7.49, T 3.4 = *Suda* Epsilon 3695) and near Arethusa, on the frontier, far from the Macedonian court (*TrGF* 5.1, T 240 = Adaeus, *Anth. Pal.* 7.51.3).[21] The biographer observes (though without comment) that both of Euripides' tombs were said to have been struck by lightning (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA.10; T 237 = *Anth. Pal.* 7.49). Usually, places that were struck by lightning were set apart and dedicated to Zeus.[22] Finally, Biographer IA relates that Sophocles, his actors, and the audience openly mourned for Euripides (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA.11 = *TrGF* 4, T 54). The reader of this biography is left with the impression that, even though absent, the poet was remembered in his native Athens and remained highly respected.

This summary narrative of the poet's life is followed by another version of Euripides' life (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IB), evidently by a different biographer. Biographer IB appears much more eager to portray the poet in a negative light. This account of Euripides' parentage does not dispute the comic poets' allegations that his mother sold vegetables (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IB.1). It says nothing about the oracle predicting Euripides' future success, noting only that he started as a painter and then, after studying with the natural philosophers Archelaus and Anaxagoras, became a tragic poet (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IB.2).[23] Biographer IB then uses the philosophers' influence as a means of accounting for his unpopularity with Athenians: "For this reason presumably (*eikotōs*) he was also somewhat arrogant and kept away from ordinary people and had no interest in appealing to his audiences. This practice hurt him as much as it helped Sophocles." Although the biographer says explicitly that this observation is based on probability (*eikos*) rather than on independent information, it helps to sustain the negative tone of his narrative.

Biographer IB further emphasizes the notion that Euripides was unpopular in Athens by stating that the comic poets attacked him (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IB.3). Although the poet ignored their criticism, he left Athens for the court of King Archelaus of Macedonia. But this biographer includes a reference to a bizarre story about Euripides' death: when he was returning late one evening, he was killed by the king's dogs. The biographer provides no further details but instead proceeds to offer a summary description of Euripides' career (*TrGF* 5.1,

T 1 IB.4), consisting of the date of his first dramatic productions and an assessment of both the positive and negative aspects of his style. He concludes with statistics, noting that in the biographer's own day sixty-seven out of ninety-five dramas were still extant and that the poet won five victories.

The next section of the *Vita* (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 II), possibly excerpted from a narrative by another biographer, describes Euripides' death in some detail. One of King Archelaus' dogs had been killed and offered as a sacrifice by a community of Thracians living in Macedonia. The villagers could not pay the large fine levied against them for this by the king, and they asked Euripides to get the king to forgive the debt. Later, when the poet was resting in a grove, he was attacked and killed by a pack of the king's dogs, who were the descendants of the dog that was sacrificed. The story was the origin of the proverb "a dog's justice."

Told in this rather matter-of-fact way, the story appears to relate a string of unfortunate coincidences that led to the poet's death; but behind this account lies a mythical narrative, the death of Pentheus, used in one Euripides' most powerful dramas, the *Bacchae*. When Pentheus refuses to give due honor to the god Dionysus, his grandfather Cadmus warns him not to be like his cousin Actaeon, who impiously boasted that he was a better hunter than Artemis and so was torn to pieces by his own dogs (337–40). When later in the drama the still obdurate Pentheus goes to the mountains to spy on the women of Thebes as they celebrate the rites of Dionysus, the Bacchant women of the chorus address the women of Thebes as "the swift dogs of madness" (977). They call upon the goddess Justice (*Dikē*) to destroy Pentheus, "the godless, lawless, wrongdoing (*atheos anomos adikos*) earth-born son of Echion" (994–95).

Biographers associated Euripides with his character Pentheus because of Aristophanes' caricatures of the poet's religious views.[24] In the *Frogs* Aristophanes portrays Euripides as praying to "different" and "personal" gods (889–94). In the *Thesmophoriazusae* a woman accuses Euripides of "persuading people that the gods do not exist" (450–51). Virtually the same charges were made against Socrates. In Plato's *Apology* Socrates includes Aristophanes among his accusers, because he had portrayed him in his *Clouds* as a sophist scrutinizing the sky and searching beneath the earth: "The people in the audience believe that such investigators do not believe in the gods" (*oude theous nomizein*, 18c). Socrates' accuser Meletus used virtually the same words in his charge that "Socrates does wrong (*adikein*) by corrupting the youth and not believing in (*nomizein*) the gods in whom the city believes" (*Apol.* 24c). An interlocutor

in Satyrus' dialogue states that Euripides "was considered to have disgraced himself in the eyes of most people for admiring Socrates excessively" (F 6 fr. 38 iv).

As we have seen, one reason biographers associated Euripides with Anaxagoras was that (like Socrates) he had been accused of impiety (*asebeia*, Diog. Laert. 2.12). Another of Euripides' supposed teachers, Protagoras, was said to have suffered the proverbial fate of the impious, shipwreck.[25] Prodicus (yet another of Euripides' "teachers") drank hemlock and died in Athens because he had allegedly "corrupted the youth" (*Suda* Pi 2365 = schol. *Resp*. 600c p. 273 Greene = 84 A1 DK). Whether or not these three sophists were actually tried for impiety or died as a result of it, clearly by Aristotle's day they were believed to have been indicted on the same grounds as Socrates.[26] Aristotle is also the earliest source of information about a trial in which Euripides was charged with impiety. Euripides was accused by the orator Hygiaenon for writing a drama demanding that an oath be foresworn: "my tongue swore it, but my mind forswore the oath" (*Hipp*. 612). Euripides defended himself by saying that he should be tried in the theater and not in a courtroom (*Rhet*. 1416a 28 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 98). The source of this kind of story is almost certainly comedy. The charge against Euripides is manifestly absurd, since anyone familiar with the plot of the *Hippolytus* would have known that in the play Hippolytus dies rather than break his oath, despite what he says about it in a moment of anger. Only when taken out of context can the line be understood to advocate impiety, as when Aristophanes makes fun of it in *Thesmophoriazusae* 274–76 and twice in the *Frogs* (101, 1471).[27] Such anecdotes were written in the wake of Socrates' trial, and Plato's concentration on it, which colored later understanding of the importance of trials for "impiety" in the fifth century.[28]

Since the Athenians executed Socrates for impiety, it was not unreasonable to suppose that Euripides also, because of his untraditional views, would have died a death appropriate to the impious, like that of the "the godless, lawless, wrongdoing Pentheus."[29] But, in the account of Euripides' death in Satyrus and in Section II of the *Vita*, only the outline of the Pentheus myth remains, barely visible behind a camouflage of mundane details. Here, as so often is the case in ancient literary biography, an explanation is provided for every aspect of the story, both in Satyrus and in the *Vita:* the villagers were disposed to kill rather than keep a valuable hunting dog because (although residing in Macedonia) they just happened to be Thracians. They needed to be Thracians, rather than Macedonians, because Thracians were known to worship Ares, one of the few gods to whom dogs were sacrificed.[30] In Satyrus' account, the poet also hap-

pens to be by himself, just like Pentheus, when the women of Thebes, whom the chorus calls "the swift dogs of madness" (977) tear him to pieces. Instead of serving as an illustration of what happens to those who do not honor the gods, the story has become the *aition* for what is said to be a Macedonian proverb, even though it appears already to have been an established saying with no specific connection to this story: "Even dogs have avenging deities" (*eisi kai kynōn Erinyes*).[31]

The next section of the *Vita* (III) contains a series of anecdotes about Euripides, with more unflattering information. The first anecdote (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 III.1) characterizes him as misanthropic. He worked in a cave by the sea in order to get away from people. The biographer explains that because of the cave's location "he drew most of his comparisons from the sea." Here, what is given as the result of the story is in fact its origin: to explain why so many of Euripides' most beautiful lyrics describe the sea, it seemed reasonable to assume that he might have lived near the sea.[32] Other tragic poets speak of the sea; its random violence is an effective metaphor for the course of human fate.[33] But stories of voluntary seaside isolation are not told about Aeschylus and Sophocles because, unlike Euripides, they are not reported to have hated other people. In the fourth century B.C. the historian Philochorus knew the story that Euripides worked in a cave in Salamis, and archaeologists have recently found a cave there which contained a vase with the poet's name on it.[34] Perhaps Euripides was connected with the island in the popular imagination because of the praise he lavished on Salamis in the *Trojan Women* (799–803).[35] In order to explain why he worked in isolation, the biographer adds: "His looks were melancholy, thoughtful, and severe; he hated laughter and he hated women. On that account Aristophanes found fault with him: 'To me [Euripides] seems sour to speak to.'" In comedy he is represented as being misanthropic. Charges of sternness and ugliness are standard in comedic invective.[36] The idea that Euripides hated women and that women wanted to kill him, which is mentioned again in a later section of the *Vita* (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IV.2) comes straight from Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae*.[37] This biographer cites Aristophanes as the source of a verse about Euripides' being unpleasant to talk to.[38]

After describing Euripides' appearance, the biographer turns to a description of his personal life, based on anecdotes inspired by Euripides' own writings. As in Herodotus, an anecdote is told first, and then the verses which it was invented to explain are cited as "evidence" for its veracity.[39] In this section of the *Vita* we are told that Euripides' wife was unfaithful on more than

one occasion and that because of her infidelity he wrote the *Hippolytus* (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 III.2). When this wife remarried, Euripides gave her second husband advice in an iambic trimeter line that paraphrases what Electra says about her adulterous mother, Clytemnestra, in *Electra*: "Poor man [meaning Aegisthus], if he thinks she will not be chaste in homes of others but will be chaste in his" (923–24).[40] Aristophanes suggests in the *Frogs* that Euripides' wife committed adultery; he has Dionysus say, "You wrote stuff about other people's wives and then were struck with the same thing yourself," referring to Euripides' dramas about adulterous women like Sthenoboea (*Ran*. 1047–48 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 106). Comedy must have been the principal source of the next story, in which Euripides finds that his second wife also has been unfaithful, making him even more eager to slander women. In Aristophanes' comedy *Thesmophoriazusae* (*Women at the Thesmophoria*), the women plot to kill Euripides, but in this section of the *Vita* they come to his cave in Salamis. Another version of the same story is told in Section IV of the *Vita*.

The story of the women seeking to attack him in his cave is followed by yet another example of Euripides' unpopularity in Athens, but this time the biographer says that it was because of envy (or hatred, *phthonos*) that he was accused of having Cephisophon as coauthor of his tragedies (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 III.3). His status at home is contrasted with the respect shown for him outside of Athens. The biographer learned from the third-century biographer Hermippus of Smyrna (fr. 94 Wehrli = *FGrHist* 1026 F 84) that Dionysius, tyrant of Sicily from 367 to 357 B.C. and himself a tragic poet, asked to have the late poet's writing materials sent to him, then presented them as a dedication in the temple of the Muses (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 III.4 = *TrGF* 2, 76 T 10).[41] Section III of the biography concludes with a final example of negative criticism: A rude youth said that the poet's breath stank, but Euripides defended himself by reciting a line of poetry that is attributed by Aulus Gellius to the third century B.C. poet Alexander of Aetolia (fr. 7 Powell = *TrGF* 5.1, T 2.8) but may ultimately derive from a comedy.[42] One of Satyrus' interlocutors (F 6 fr. 39 col. xx 1–15) tells a version of the same story, in which it is King Archelaus of Macedonia who defends Euripides with the lines about the sweetness of his mouth (F 6 fr. 39 xx). But in the context where the biographer of this section of the *Vita* has placed the anecdote, it becomes another instance of the Athenians' hatred for the poet.[43]

The fourth and final section of the *Vita* relates more stories about the poet's problems with women (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IV.1). The biographer explains that Euripides hated women because he discovered that his wife had been unfaith-

ful to him with his slave Cephisophon. He could not persuade her to return to him, so he left her to Cephisophon. A line from Aristophanes is cited to "verify" the story, which alleges that Cephisophon "lived with Euripides in a lot of ways" and that he helped the poet write his plays (fr. 59 KA, *PCG* III.2, 318). Aristophanes used the same joke in the *Frogs*, where Dionysus claims that Euripides wrote tragedies "mixing in Cephisophon for flavor" (944, cf. 1451–53 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 52a, c).[44] The biographer now tells how the women of Athens tried to ambush Euripides at the Thesmophoria because he criticized them in his poetry, but they spared him out of respect for the Muses and because of a speech in his *Melanippe Captive* praising women (*TrGF* 5.1, F 494.1–3). The first part of this story alludes to Aristophanes' comedy *Thesmophoriazusae*, in which the women of Athens conspire to kill Euripides.[45] The anecdotes in the *Vita* about Cephisophon and the women's plot both derive from Satyrus (F 6 fr. 39 x–xiii). But in the *Vita*, the playfulness inherent in Satyrus' dialogue is lost; so also is the essential logic of the narrative. In Satyrus, the account of the women's meeting is explicitly based on Aristophanes. It is followed by a passage in which an interlocutor cites a long excerpt from the *Melanippe* (F 6 fr. 39 xi = *TrGF* 5.1, F 494 5–16).[46] Also in Satyrus, the story about Euripides' wife and Cephisophon follows the description of the women's attack and Euripides' defense, in order to explain why the poet was irritated with women in general (*prosōchthisen tōi genei*, F 6 fr. 39 xii). Satyrus' interlocutor claims that Euripides and Cephisophon swapped wives, which another interlocutor finds "quite amusing." In Satyrus, Euripides gets Cephisophon's wife in exchange for his own (F 6 fr. 39 xiii), which is the sort of thing that could happen only in comedy.[47] In the *Vita*, Euripides gets nothing from Cephisophon.[48] Excerptors, such as the writer of this section of the *Vita*, prefer to emphasize the negative and the sensational.

Biographer IA concluded his narrative by quoting an epigram praising Euripides and relating an anecdote about how Sophocles and his actors made a public statement of their sorrow at his death (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA 10–11). But the writer of this section of the *Vita* ends his account with the suggestion that the fourth-century comic poet Philemon was excessive in his praise for Euripides: "Philemon was so devoted to Euripides that he dared (*etolmēsen*) to say the following of him: 'If it's true the dead have feeling, as some men say, then I would hang myself so I could see Euripides'" (fr. 115 KA, *PCG* VII.290). The biographer does not note that the speaker of these lines would have been not Philemon himself but a character in one of his comedies. In the *Frogs* it is not Aristophanes but the god Dionysus who goes to Hades in search of Euripides.[49]

But here, as seems customary in literary biographies, the poet and his works are regarded as synonymous.

If we compare the Euripides Vita to the other biographies that we have examined, it is clear that Euripides is characterized even more negatively than the other poets. They are said to have been isolated or exiled from their home cities during their lifetimes, but Euripides is accused of having collaborated with other people on his work, yet at the same time he is blamed for being wordy in dialogue and "vulgar and irritating in his prologues" (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IIB.4). He is called ugly and difficult to talk to. Because he is supposedly hated by the Athenians, and by women in particular, he deliberately isolates himself from all of them in a cave in Salamis. Other poets die in remarkable ways, but Euripides dies in a manner that is spectacularly violent and demeaning.

In outline, Euripides' biography bears some resemblance to the lives of the mythical heroes who are the protagonists of Greek drama. He was distinguished early in life because of his talent, and he judged himself to be superior to other people. His productivity as a dramatist was extraordinary, but the ancient Greeks' attitude toward remarkable achievement was always ambivalent. Though it seems strange to us, Greeks celebrated victory by both praising and blaming; and at the moment of triumph, they warned of sorrows to come.[50] They would compare a victorious athlete to the gods but then assure him of the dangers he had risked by winning: the gods' envy, man's hatred, the certainty of eventual failure. Greek tragedy also celebrates this ethic of simultaneous love and hate. In drama, men of great stature or singular ability, like Oedipus or Heracles, confront great challenges and fail. As a result, they are banished from society, often by literal exile; yet they are worshiped after their deaths. The great poets were treated similarly. Their biographies preserve distant traces of an Indo-European mythological pattern in which heroes become scapegoats, isolated and reviled by their contemporaries, but are then reinstated after their deaths.[51]

As we have seen, some of the details of the narrative of Euripides' *Vita* were circulating in the fourth century B.C. The historian of Athens, Philochorus, knew the story that Euripides worked in a cave in Salamis, and Philochorus argued that his mother could not have been a vegetable-seller.[52] The stories about the poet's time in Macedonia may date from the fourth century as well. They appear to have been created in response to the increasing importance of that region in ancient Greek history, starting with Philip's invasion of mainland Greece, continuing with Alexander's conquests, and culminating in the establishment of a Macedonian dynasty in Egypt.[53] The narrative of Euripides'

death ultimately derives from his drama the *Bacchae*, but it may also have been inspired by the nature of King Archelaus' death: he was killed by his lover Crateras (or Craterus or Crataeus or Crateuas) during a hunt (Diod. Sic. 14.37.5; Plut., *Amat*. 768F). The *Suda* preserves an account of Euripides' death with details not found in the *Vita* which make him the victim of a conspiracy by two poets, Arrhibaeus and Crateus, described as his enemies (*TrGF* 5.1, T 3, 4). The idea of a plot by poets could have been inspired by Euripides' own words about competition, such as the prayer to the goddess Victory at the end of some of his dramas.[54] In the story in the *Suda*, the rival poets bribed the king's servant Lysimachus to release on Euripides the royal dogs, which he himself had raised (*hous autos etrephe*). Cadmus uses the same phrase to describe Actaeon's dogs in the *Bacchae* (*has ethrepsato*, 338). Although both of the stories about the hunting dogs were inspired at least in part by Euripides' own words, it was Aristophanes' comedy *Thesmophoriazusae* that provided the plot line for yet another story about Euripides' death, also preserved in the *Suda* (Epsilon 3695 Adler = *TrGF* 5.1, T 3.4), in which the poet was killed by women because of his passion for Craterus, who was Archelaus' lover and later his assassin.[55] Comedy could also be the original source of the anecdote preserved by Aristotle (*TrGF* 5.1, T 102 = *Pol.* 1311b 23) about Decamnichus, the leader of the successful assassination plot against Archelaus in 399. The king had permitted Euripides to flog Decamnichus because of a remark he had made about the poet's bad breath.[56] Then there is the story that Euripides was a womanizer who, "struck by Aphrodite's crooked bow," had pursued Archelaus' housekeeper (*TrGF* 5.1, T 106a = Hermesianax 7.63–64 Powell). This tale may have had its origins in the stories behind the lines in the *Frogs* in which Aeschylus says to Euripides that Aphrodite "sat down often and heavily on you and yours and threw you down" (*Ran*. 1046–47).

The second-century B.C. biographer Satyrus of Callatis was aware of the significance of Euripides' connection with Macedonia. In his dialogue about the life of Euripides, one of his interlocutors explains that the Athenians "only learned later from the Macedonians and Sicilians that Euripides was a great poet" (F 6 39 xix). The interlocutor tells the story (also in Plut., *Vit. Nic.* 29) of how many Athenian captives were spared by the Syracusans because they could recite Euripides' verses, and he is just starting to say something about Archelaus in Macedonia when the text breaks off. In the next fragment someone is beginning to relate the anecdote about Euripides' bad breath, though it does not seem as if the two stories were connected.

As a biographer, however, Satyrus is distinguished by both his learning and

his understanding of the biographer's art. Like other writers, Satyrus continued to use quotations as the building blocks for his biography and has his interlocutors use whatever the poet wrote as evidence of his personal views, although none of Euripides' dramas (by their very nature) could have contained explicitly autobiographical materials.[57] But Satyrus also shows how the methodology can be misused. A little earlier in the dialogue, Interlocutor A introduced the discussion of Euripides' time in Macedonia by speculating that Euripides had alluded to his decision to go to Macedonia in a choral song from one of his dramas. But Interlocutor B is not persuaded (F 6 fr. 39 col. xvii):

> (A) Euripides, however, gave (so to speak) his affidavit renouncing Athens.
> (B) What sort of affidavit?
> (A) It was set out in this *stasimon*: "I have golden wings on my back, and have put on my feet the Sirens' winged sandals; I shall go into the sky, lifted high into the wide air, and join the company of Zeus . . ." (*TrGF* 5.2, F 911)

Interlocutor A asserts that the lines were intended "metaphorically" to flatter King Archelaus (F 6 fr. 39 col. xviii). But Interlocutor B refuses to trust A's fanciful interpretation: "What you say seems more ingenious than true." A replies: "You can understand that as you wish" (F 6 fr. 39 col. xviii).

It seems clear even on the basis of the fragments that have come down to us that Satyrus was well aware of the limitations of the evidence on which he and other biographers were compelled to rely. His interlocutors remind his audience that they are quoting selectively: "Indeed Aristophanes says, as if summoned to explain this matter, 'he is like what he makes his characters say'" (F 6 fr. 39 ix = *TrGF* 5.1, T 105). The interlocutors warn that their sources are less than reliable: "The death he met was very difficult and idiosyncratic, as the story-tellers (*logioi*) and oldest men among the Macedonians tell the story (*mythologousi*)" (F 6 fr. 39 xx = *TrGF* 5.1, T 122). As a literary creation, Satyrus' dialogue about Euripides' life is an example of the best that ancient biographers could offer: wit, imagination, and an impressive knowledge of the poet's works. Satyrus makes it clear to his audience that he is not writing a historical narrative. He employs the dialogue form used by Plato and Aristotle, which allows a speaker's statements to be questioned or modified by others.[58] At least one of the interlocutors, Eurycleia, is female, and it appears to be she who makes some of the more extravagant claims about the poet.[59] Audiences can take or leave what they have heard.

In the *Vita*, all sense of debate (and humor) has disappeared. Quotations are introduced as evidence without qualification or concern about their

provenance. Where the speakers in Satyrus' dialogue have discussions about whether or not there are Socratic notions in Euripides, the *Vita* offers instead a statement about literal collaboration.[60] An elaborate and appreciative discussion of Euripides' artistic qualities in Satyrus emerges in the *Vita* as a summary negative assessment (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IB.4).[61] In the *Vita*, debate on Euripides' attitude toward women survives only in outline. Extensive quotations from *Melanippe* are cut to essentials (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IV.2), and nothing is quoted from *Thesmophoriazusae*.[62] Also missing in the *Vita* are Satyrus' quotations of Euripides' views on wealth, demagoguery, family relations and courage (F 6 fr. 39 iii, iv, vi); the story of his championing of the poet Timotheus (xxii); and the anecdote about how Athenian soldiers won release in Sicily by reciting verses of Euripides (xix).[63] Narrative suffers less attrition than intellectual debate, but even there nonessential detail is pruned away. The *Vita*'s account of Euripides' death (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 II) describes how the poet interceded with Archelaus of Macedon on behalf of some hunters whom he had punished for sacrificing a dog, and then was killed by the offspring of the dog that had been sacrificed. This narrative is said to provide the *aition* for the Macedonian proverb "a dog's justice." But in Satyrus' account (F 6 fr. 39 xxi) the way the proverb is worded makes better sense: "there is such a thing as justice even for a dog."[64]

Satyrus appears to maintain some objectivity about his subject. Excerptors prefer the negative and the sensational. In Satyrus, the story of Euripides and Cephisophon ends with each getting the other's wife (F 6 fr. 39 xiii); in the *Vita*, only Cephisophon wins (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IV.1). Satyrus' account preserves chronological order.[65] In Satyrus the anecdote about Euripides' bad breath is located in Macedonia (F 6 fr. 39 xx); in the *Vita* it becomes another instance of the Athenians' hatred of him (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 III.5). In Satyrus, Archelaus defends Euripides with the lines about the sweetness of his mouth (F 6 fr. 39 xx), but in the *Vita*, Euripides speaks the lines himself. By relating anecdotes out of context, the narrative in the *Vita* offers not so much a biography as a catalogue of fault-finding, oddly combined with some appreciation.

In emphasizing Euripides' human failings, the excerptors appear to be working in a tradition of narrative realism that began in the fifth century in the plays of Euripides himself.[66] It is Euripides who depicts Orestes as a killer with incestuous tendencies and not as the noble, pious son who returns in the *Libation Bearers* to avenge his father's death. Poets, starting with Hesiod in the eighth century, had always described themselves as isolated from and superior to other men.[67] Euripides quite literally removes himself from society, by living like a hermit in his cave. Other details included in the *Vita* convey the

impression that Euripides was a lonely misfit, hated in his own home and in his own city. Of the various accounts of his death, the Vita retains the one that emphasizes his isolation, that while alone in a grove he was killed by hunting dogs; no reference is made to a plot against Euripides by other poets, or to his love affair with Archelaus' housekeeper, or to his being killed by women while on his way to visit Archelaus' boy lover Craterus, or to the possibility that he simply died of old age.[68] The poet's life has been made sufficiently unpleasant for readers to be content that they have not accomplished as much as he. By emphasizing that he wrote his dramas in reaction to particular events, the *Vita* represents Euripides' achievement as a process requiring no special talent other than emotions like anger or fear. His gifts become at once accessible and comprehensible.[69]

In Aristophanes' *Frogs* the poet was regarded as a teacher; Alcidamas' *On Homer* offers his account of the poet's life as an "education" for "lovers of the noble and good" (fr. 7 Avezzù = fr. 27 Muir). Satyrus provides examples of Euripides' moral teachings, but the compilers of Euripides' *Vita* do not explicitly state that his poetry has lasting ethical value. Their portrait of the poet suggests that they considered drama to be tangential to their lives and even morally dangerous. Whether they were school masters or civil servants or solitary scholars, they appear to have supposed that their audiences might be better entertained by the actions of the dramatist than by the words of drama. Biography had begun to take its place alongside literature. Starting in the fourth century, if travelers visited Salamis, tourist guides could point out to them Euripides' cave.

But, even though they had only limited information at their disposal, biographers could and did give deliberate shape to their narratives and speak about the poet with greater appreciation than that shown by the compilers of Euripides' *Vita*. The narrative events of Euripides' life were known to Aulus Gellius in the second century A.D. (15.20 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 2). Gellius, however, used the material at his disposal to offer a more sympathetic account than had the compilers of the *Vita*. According to Gellius, Euripides gave up athletics in order to cultivate his mind, and for that reason studied with Anaxagoras, Prodicus, and Socrates. But Gellius says nothing about the poet's collaboration with these philosophers. He mentions the story of how the poet was killed by dogs that had been set upon him by a rival, not the incredible tale recounted in the *Vita* about hunting dogs killing the poet in an act of retribution. He concludes with an account of the respect with which Euripides was held in Macedonia.[70]

Unfortunately, however, it is the more negative "biography" of Euripides

in his *Vita* that has had a lasting influence on later assessments of his work. Scholars still assume that Euripides' dramas were misunderstood and even reviled in his own day. As Lesky put it, "Euripides' relationship to his state and public was different from that of his predecessors"; we tend to think of Euripides as "a misunderstood personality tragically isolated from his environment."[71] We suppose that he used his dramatic works to question traditional cultural values, especially those connected with religion and morality, and that, like Socrates, he appeared to be critical of traditional religion.[72] These are the same charges that led to Socrates' execution (Plato, *Apol.* 18b, 24b). Certainly, some characters in his dramas express doubts about the gods, and some are portrayed as questioning their very existence, such as the hero Bellerophon in a lost drama (*TrGF* 5.1, F 286.1–3).[73] But in virtually all of the plays, there are also characters who express views that are completely consistent with traditional piety. Even though some characters suffer and complain about the nature of divine justice, the gods always remain in control, whether or not the humans who complain about them are fully aware of the extent of their powers.[74]

Ultimately, perhaps, the most valuable lesson we can learn from the study of the Euripides *Vita* is that today we have very little historical information about the poet's life, other than his approximate dates. We do not know anything about his motives for writing, his personal religious beliefs or lack of them, or his actual relationship with the Athenians or their collective or individual assessments of him. In reality we are in no better position than Satyrus or any other ancient biographer, since we also must deduce from his surviving words virtually all that we can know about him.

Comic Poets

Fifth-century Athenian comedy was concerned with politics and other current events, and poets expressed their opinions about those topics in the choral interlude known as the *parabasis* or "transition." But even though Aristophanes' biographers could draw on these first-person statements, they could not extract the kind of detailed personal information that would have enabled them to recreate the chronology of his life or to describe in any detail the circumstances in which he worked. Because Aristophanes' statements in the *parabaseis* are primarily about comic poetry or Athenian politics, his biographers concentrated on Aristophanes' place in the history of Greek literature, and they claim for him a role as champion of Athenian democracy and freedom of speech.

The compiler of Aristophanes' *Vita* does not include information about his dates (450? to ca. 386 B.C.).[1] Instead, the biographer begins by emphasizing his achievements: "It was he who first decided to transform comedy, which was still wandering around in the old style, into something more constructive and serious. Comedy had previously been nastier and more shameless because the poets Cratinus and Eupolis had uttered more slander than was appropriate" (T 1.2–5 KA, *PCG* III.2, 1). No sources for this information are specified, but the idea that Aristophanes was not only a better poet but more elegant and less crude than his predecessors and contemporaries comes from several *parabaseis* in his own plays (*Eq.* 516–50, *Nub.* 533–48, *Pax* 734–51).[2] The notion of reforming art in the guise of a wayward and shameless woman also has analogues in comedy. In the *Frogs* Aristophanes has Euripides say to Aeschylus:

"When I first took over Tragic Art from you, swollen from your bombast and heavy words, I first slimmed her down and took off weight" (939–41). In the *parabasis* of the *Clouds* the poet speaks of his play as "basically chaste" (537).[3] The biographer then adds that Aristophanes set the model for New Comedy in his *Cocalus* (T 1.4–6 KA, *PCG* III.2, 1), a statement that is elaborated on later in the *Vita* (49–50).

Next the biographer explains how Aristophanes gained recognition for his work: "Since he was very cautious at the start, all the more because he was so gifted, he produced his first plays under the names of Callistratus and Philonides; because of this Aristonymus and Ameipsias made fun of him, saying that (as in the proverb) he was born on the fourth day, to toil for other men" (T 1.7–10 KA). It is possible that the source of this information was the *didaskaliai*, if it can be assumed that young poets did not serve as producers of comedies until they gained experience; Philonides was a member of Aristophanes' own *thiasos* (*IG* II^2 3.2343).[4] But it is much more likely that this information comes from a literal interpretation of allusions in Aristophanes' own comedies, for example, "since I was a girl, I was not allowed to give birth, I exposed it; another girl took it up, and you [the audience] generously brought it up and educated it" (*Nub.* 530–32, cf. schol. 518). In the *parabasis* of the *Knights* the chorus claim that Aristophanes had not asked for a chorus previously, "because he thought producing a comedy (*kōmōidodidaskein*) was very difficult work" and because he says that a poet, like a pilot, ought to serve first as oarsman and then as officer on the bow before he takes over the helm (513–50). The analogy of the pilot's training might have suggested to biographers that the production of a comedy was a complex operation that could involve the talents of several poets at a time,[5] but comic poets often alleged that one poet wrote another's plays. Eupolis in his *Baptai* says that he helped Aristophanes compose the *Knights* (fr. 89 KA, *PCG* V, 339). Aristophanes suggests in the *Clouds* (553–56) that Eupolis' *Maricas* was a bad reworking of the *Knights.* Dionysus claims in the *Frogs* that Sophocles wrote for his son Iophon (*Ran.* 78–79) and that Cephisophon helped Euripides (*Ran.* 944; fr. 596 KA, *PCG* III.2, 318). Biographer IA of the Euripides *Vita* quotes Aristophanes' contemporary Teleclides' verses about how Socrates and Mnesilochus collaborated with Euripides (fr. 41 KA, *PCG* VII, 683 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA.3). These jokes emerge as serious information in the *Vitae* of the dramatists.[6]

The biographer next describes Aristophanes' enmity for Cleon the demagogue and his criticism in the *Knights* of Cleon's thefts and tyrannical nature (T 1.11–13 KA, *PCG* III.2, 1). The biographer says that Aristophanes himself

acted the part of Cleon, smearing his face with red dye (*miltos*, 13–16), when none of the costumers would make a mask of him. The author of a hypothesis of the *Knights* says that Aristophanes at first crouched down out of fear when he played the part of Cleon, but then later showed his face as producer of the drama (II.1, I, 66 Wilson). The idea of smearing with red dye (*miltos*) may refer to the Athenian practice of smearing latecomers to the assembly (*Ach*. 22) with a rope soaked in *miltos*.[7] The idea that no one would make a mask of Cleon is based on the lines in the *Knights:* "Do not worry, he does not look like himself. The costumers were afraid to make a likeness of him. But he'll be recognizable all the same, because the audience is clever" (230–33).[8] Biographers (or their sources) might have gotten the idea that Aristophanes himself acted the part of Cleon because in the *parabasis* of the *Clouds* Aristophanes describes his attacks on Cleon as physical assaults: "I went for Cleon below the belt, but I did not have the nerve to jump on him again when he was down" (549–50; cf. 581). Having poets act in their own dramas helps to relate their lives to their works; there was a picture in the Painted Stoa of Sophocles playing the role of bard in his drama *Thamyris* (*TrGF* 4, T 1.5). Aristophanes' biographer (T 1.15–18 KA) also claims that by playing the role of Cleon in the *Knights* in 424 B.C. Aristophanes was responsible for Cleon's being fined five talents. He cites in "confirmation" of this event Dicaeopolis' lines about Cleon's fine in the *Acharnians* (5–6): "But one thing really made me happy, when I saw those five talents that Cleon vomited up."[9] Here it is clear that the biographer is less interested in chronology than in making a general point about Aristophanes' courage: the *Acharnians* was produced in 425, the year *before* the *Knights*.

When Aristophanes expresses his own opinions in his *parabaseis*, he speaks as if he were an Athenian citizen, and his status as such is confirmed by an inscription.[10] But his biographer reports that Cleon had entered a lawsuit against Aristophanes because Aristophanes was a foreigner and had usurped citizen's rights (*graphē xenias*) and because the poet had criticized the elected magistrates in the presence of foreigners in his *Babylonians* (T 1 KA, 20–22, *PCG* III.2, 2). The biographer explains (T 1, 23–26 KA): "Some say that [Aristophanes] was himself a foreigner, inasmuch as some say he was a Rhodian from Lindos, others that he was an Aeginetan, an assumption based on his having spent a considerable amount of time there or on his owning property there. According to other authorities it was that his father Philippus was an Aeginetan. Aristophanes absolved himself from these charges by wittily quoting Homer's lines: 'My mother says I'm his son, but I do not know myself. For no one knows his own father'" (*Od.* 1.215–16).

Here comic repartee about Aristophanes' parents, with Aristophanes defending himself by quoting Telemachus' famous lines has been understood as actual litigation over his citizenship. But the original source of the information about Aristophanes' origins was his comedy *Acharnians*. There the poet claims that the Spartans wanted the island of Aegina not for its own sake but "to take away our poet," that is, Aristophanes himself (654).[11] The biographer realizes that the notion that Aristophanes came from Aegina is an "assumption based on his having spent a considerable amount of time or on his owning property there" (T 1.23–24 KA, *PCG* III.2, 2), but then he adds that Aristophanes was accused two more times of not being a citizen. When "he had been clearly established as a citizen" (*phaneros katastatheis politēs*), he was able to "win out" over Cleon (T 1.26–27 KA). This statement summarizes other comic allegations that had been interpreted literally by biographers. These are mentioned in the *Suda* entry on Aristophanes and in the preface to a catalogue of Aristophanes' plays, which tells us that "Aristophanes was a Rhodian or Lindian; some say Egyptian, some from Camirus [in Rhodes]. He was an Athenian by special decree (*thesis*)" (Alpha 3932 = T 2a, b.1–2 KA). These claims are as absurd as the notion that Sophocles was a Phliasian or that Euripides' mother sold vegetables.[12] The notion that Aristophanes was given Athenian citizenship by special decree looks like a biographer's attempt to resolve the conflict created by his predecessors' tendency to take even comic accusations at face value.[13]

The biographer's notion that Aristophanes was repeatedly the subject of lawsuits by Cleon explicitly derives from the comic character Dicaeopolis' description in the *Acharnians* of his experiences with an Athenian jury: "I myself am well aware of what Cleon did to me because of last year's comedy. He dragged me into the Council chamber, accused me, and badmouthed me with his lies" (377–80). In the *Vita*, dramatic context is ignored and Dicaeopolis is assumed to be speaking directly for Aristophanes. A little later in the *Vita* (T 1.27–39 KA), the biographer quotes Dicaeopolis' lines about Cleon, but with the clause about "last year's comedy" removed (they are glossed as "and so on").[14] That way the lines can be understood to refer to Cleon's enmity for Aristophanes generally. The scholia on the *Acharnians* (378) claim that Cleon also accused Aristophanes (not Dicaeopolis!) of "attacking the state" (*adikias eis tous politas egrapsato*) and of committing *hybris* against the *dēmos* and the *boulē*. When the chorus leader in the *parabasis* of the *Wasps* complains about Cleon's harassment of the poet, the scholia to the lines suggest that he, too, might be referring to the same trial (schol. *Vesp.* 1284). In each case the no-

tion of a "trial" provides a convenient explanation of Aristophanes' animosity against Cleon, but since the details about the nature of the charges are inconsistent, we may be justified in suspecting that the trial was a creative fiction.[15] Phony trials were a beloved feature of comedy.[16]

The discussion about Cleon's attacks on Aristophanes is followed by another example of Aristophanes' political courage. The biographer asserts that "he was held in high regard for having got rid of the informers, whom he called Fevers in the *Wasps*" (T 1.29–33 KA *PCG* III.2, 2), citing his attack on informers in the *parabasis* of that comedy (1038–39). Here again, the biographer accepts as fact Aristophanes' claims, although a glance at Thucydides would have revealed that the informers were still effectively at work in 415, seven years after the *Wasps* had been produced! But the biographer is determined to show that Aristophanes was a champion of democracy: "People praised and liked him particularly because of his determination to show in his dramas that the government of Athens was free and not enslaved by any tyrant, and that it was a democracy and that since they were free, the people ruled themselves" (T 1.32–36 KA, *PCG* III.2, 2). As a further example, the biographer adds that Aristophanes' plea on behalf of the disenfranchised residents of Athens (*Ran.* 686–96) won him public recognition in the form of an olive crown.[17]

Next the biographer provides examples of recognition awarded to the poet outside Athens. Because of his fame, a particular metrical pattern was named for him (T 1, 40–41 KA, *PCG* III.2, 3), though the biographer does not mention that half a century earlier Aeschylus had used the same pattern in his lyrics.[18] The biographer then states as fact a patently absurd claim that "the king of the Persians asked whose side the comic poet was on" (T 1, 41–42 KA), without pointing out that this information comes straight from the *parabasis* of the *Acharnians*, where the chorus claims that the king of Persia had heard that whichever side Aristophanes was advising would win the war, a joke that is followed by an even more preposterous claim (mentioned above) that the Spartans wanted the island of Aegina not for itself but because they would get Aristophanes along with it (647–54).[19] The biographer gives as a final example of the poet's renown an anecdote in which Plato advises the tyrant Dionysius II of Syracuse to study Aristophanes if he wants to learn about democracy (T 1, 42–45 KA). The idea that Plato knew and admired Aristophanes comes from the *Symposium*, but the anecdote about the advice to Dionysius was almost certainly invented sometime after the fourth century B.C., after a whole literature about Plato's tutoring of the tyrant had been created.[20]

The biographer now describes Aristophanes' place in literary history (T 1,

46–54 KA, *PCG* III.2, 3–4). Aristophanes, he says, was responsible for the form of later comedy. Again the biographer emphasizes the political significance of the change, though specifying that these restrictions were the result of Athens' defeat by Sparta in 404.[21] According to the *Vita*, in 387, when it was no longer permissible to ridicule people by name and state subsidies for choruses were no longer available, Aristophanes wrote the (now-lost) *Cocalus*, a comedy without choruses whose plot involved the kind of seduction and recognition scenes that Menander liked to use. The biographer adds, as if it happened subsequently, that Aristophanes omitted choruses also in the *Wealth* (*Plutus*), a comedy that was actually produced in 388, the year before the *Cocalus* was produced. The information about the absence of the chorus could easily have been deduced from the text of the comedies.

After relating that the *Plutus* was produced by Aristophanes' son Araros, the biographer moves on to Aristophanes' death, leaving three sons (Philippus, Nicostratus, and Araros)—or two sons (Philippus and Araros), because there is a reference in one of his plays to "my wife and two innocent children" (fr. 604 KA, *PCG* III.2, 322).[22] The biographer provides no information about Aristophanes' death or tombs. The poet apparently never was accorded the status of a hero. Aristophanes' biographer concludes his *Vita* by mentioning that he produced forty-four plays, of which four are deemed spurious.[23]

In contrast to the unremarkable death of his rival Aristophanes, the comic poet Eupolis was said to have been drowned by Alcibiades off Sicily or in the Hellespont. Eupolis had attacked Alcibiades in his play the *Dippers*, and some lines in the play apparently referred to drowning (T 3 KA, *PCG* V, 332).[24] But the third-century scholar-poet Eratosthenes apparently discounted the drowning story on the grounds that Eupolis went on producing plays after the performance of the *Dippers* (*FGrHist* 241 F 19). Aelian preserves an anecdote about Eupolis' death (*NA* 10.41 = T 5 KA, *PCG* V, 295) that does not refer to his drowning. As in Eratosthenes' story about the death of Hesiod (*Cert.* §14), a faithful dog is involved. Eupolis' dog Augeas caught his slave Ephialtes as he was stealing Eupolis' plays and killed him. When Eupolis died, the dog died of grief, and the poet's burial site in Aegina was named "Dog's Grief."[25]

Sensational stories, no matter how derogatory, were taken seriously by biographers even when their origins were as fictitious as Cloud-Cuckoo Land in the *Birds* or the trial in Hades in the *Frogs*. According to his *Suda* biography, the comic poet Cratinus was a drunk and a pederast (Kappa 2344 = T 1 KA,

PCG IV, 112). The idea that he was a drunk comes straight from comedy. Apparently Cratinus portrayed himself as a drunk in his *Pytine* (T ii KA, *PCG* IV, 219). In the *Peace*, Aristophanes has a character say that Cratinus died when the Spartans invaded Attica in 425 B.C. because "he could not bear to see a jar full of wine being broken" (*Pax* 701–73 = T 2 KA, *PCG* IV, 112).[26] The original audience would have known that Cratinus actually had died about two years later. When Aristophanes has the god Dionysus complain about other poets' stock comic routines in the *Frogs* (13–18), an ancient commentator reported as fact that Phrynichus, Lycis, and Amipsias were "frigid comic poets" (Lycis T 2 KA = *PCG* V, 615). If textual evidence for such claims could not be provided, commentators could rely on hypothetical explanations. The first-century B.C. scholar Didymus said: "Phrynichus was caricatured also for his foreign birth, the poorness of his plays, plagiarizing, and metrical irregularities . . . but Phrynichus does not do this in his surviving plays. It is a reasonable hypothesis (*eikos*) that he did something of the sort in his *lost* plays" (Phrynicus T 8 KA = *PCG* VII, 394).[27] Apparently Didymus did not take into consideration the fact that comic poets' characterizations of each other were exaggerated and intended to amuse their audiences.

When comic poets no longer included references to historical persons, biographers were compelled to glean from the plots of the plays whatever information they could. Not surprisingly, poets of New Comedy were thought to have been involved with courtesans (*hetairai*). Menander (344/3–242/1 B.C.) is said to have been in love with a *hetaira* Glycera, who was a character in his *Perikeiromenē,* the *Woman-Hater* (*Misogynes*, fr. 240 KA, *PCG* VI.2.167) and *Glycera*, in which a character addresses her as "dearest" (fr. 96, *PCG* VI.2, 90–91).[28] According to the *Suda* (Mu 589 = T 1 KA), Menander was "absolutely mad for women" (*ekmanestatos*), like the heroes in his plays who fall in love at first sight (e.g., Sostratus in Menander's *Dyscolus* 52).[29] Menander had such difficulties with women that he is said to have criticized the comic poet Philemon for calling a beloved *hetaira* (or for that matter, any woman) "good" in one of his plays (T 17 KA, *PCG* VI.2, 5).[30] As in the case of Euripides, who is said to have written the *Hippolytus* because he found his wife committing adultery (*TrGF* 5.1, T A.1 III.2), Menander's work came to have a direct and tangible connection to his life.[31] In the third century A.D., the writer Alciphron composed an exchange of letters between Menander and Glycera, expressing their love for each other and discussing whether or not he should accept an invitation by the first Macedonian pharaoh, Ptolemy I Soter (367/6–282 B.C.), to come to

Egypt (iv.2, 18, 19 = T 20 KA, *PCG* VI.2, 5–11).[32] These letters have survived even though the texts of most of Menander's comedies have been lost.

Like the other poets, Menander was connected by his biographers with other famous literary figures, probably on the basis of perceived similarities in style or approach. Menander is said to have been a pupil of Theophrastus, the author of the *Characters* (Diog. Laert. 5.36 = T 8 KA, *PCG* VI.2, 2).[33] According to the *Suda*, the comic poet Alexis was his uncle (T 6 KA, *PCG* VI.2, 2) or his teacher (T 3, *PCG* VI.2, 1). As we have seen, Sophocles is said to have learned about tragedy from Aeschylus (*TrGF* 4, T 1.4), and Euripides is supposed to have studied with the philosophers Anaxagoras, Protagoras, Prodicus, and Socrates (*TrGF* 5.1, T A.1 IA.2). According to Diogenes Laertius, Menander was attacked by the Athenians because of his friendship with Demetrius, and almost brought to trial, but Demetrius' nephew Telesphorus begged him off (Diog. Laert. V.79 = T 9 KA, *PCG* VI.2, 3).[34] Menander's appearance is contrasted to his intelligence: "He was cross-eyed but keen in mind" (*Suda* Mu 589 = T 1 KA, *PCG* VI.2, 1). Similarly, the eloquent Sophocles (*TrGF* 4, T 1.4) and Plato are said to have had small voices (Diog. Laert. 3.5), and Aristotle is said to have lisped (Diog. Laert. 5.1).[35] The voluble Euripides (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IB.3) looked "melancholy, thoughtful, and severe" (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 III.1). Perhaps some of this information was recorded by the comic poet Lynceus in his memoir *On Menander*, but unfortunately all that remains of that book is its title and an anecdote from it about two other men noted for their witty sayings (*PCG* V, 616 = fr. 35 Dalby).[36]

If Menander and other poets of New Comedy are described as having led lives or died deaths that were less exciting than those of the writers of tragedy or even of Old Comedy, it may well be because their plots did not deal with family curses, murders, or politics. Menander, who wrote plays about separated lovers, is said to have drowned while swimming off the Piraeus (T 23 KA, *PCG* VI.2, 12). Callimachus mentioned the incident in a (now-lost) epigram (fr. 396 Pf). The story sounds like an episode in a Hellenistic romance; Ovid associates it with Hero and Leander (*Ibis* 591–92). Although Pausanias saw Menander's tomb in Piraeus (1.2.2 = T 24 KA, *PCG* VI.2, 12), he says nothing about his drowning; neither does Diodorus in his epitaph about the tomb (2174–77 *GP*). The biographers preferred dramatic stories. The death of Menander's slightly older contemporary Philemon is variously said to have occurred in several memorable ways, each related to the theater. According to the *Suda*, Philemon died from laughing too much (Phi 327 T 1 KA = *PCG* VII, 221). According to another entry, he dreamt that he saw nine young women

leaving the room and was told that they were not permitted to stay; this he interpreted as a warning that he was about to die, since the Muses had left him. So, he finished the play he had been writing and died (*Suda*, Phi 328 = T 6 KA, *PCG* VII, 222). Plutarch says that Philemon and Alexis died after they were awarded the crown of victory (*An Seni* 785b = T 8 KA, *PCG* VII, 223). There is a parallel here to one of the stories told about the death of Sophocles, who is said to have died of joy after he won the crown with the *Antigone* (*TrGF* 4, T 1.I4).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Hellenistic Poets

Much of the Greek poetry composed after the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. has a retrospective and reflective character. Even as they created something new, poets living in the diaspora of Greek culture found ways to acknowledge the great literary legacy they had inherited.[1] Included in that legacy was the tradition of creating biography, which survived and flourished throughout the Greek-speaking world. Even though the second-century B.C. author Satyrus was a native of the Black Sea town of Callatis, he was conversant with the works of the great tragedians and the comedies of Aristophanes. He also knew how earlier biographers had constructed lives for these poets; the interlocutors in his *Life of Euripides* consciously make use of passages in Aristophanes' and Euripides' own dramas. Although modern scholars have often supposed, or at least hoped, that Hellenistic biographers had access to more-accurate information and were historically more sophisticated than fourth-century biographers, the surviving evidence suggests that, like the poets of their day, biographers preserved and respected the traditions of their craft. In this way some remarkable myths were invented that have influenced later literary criticism as pervasively as the fifth-century notion that Euripides was an atheist. The most influential of these stories is the so-called quarrel between the third-century poets Callimachus of Cyrene and Apollonius of Rhodes.

Virtually all modern assessments of Apollonius' work discuss his alleged differences with Callimachus, although no surviving text by either poet refers directly to a quarrel between them. The idea that they might have clashed de-

rives from later interpretation, most specifically from an attempt to identify the critics to whom Callimachus refers in the prologue to his *Aetia*.[2] Callimachus begins that poem by talking about his adversaries: "Telchines chatter at my song, ignorant men, who are no friends of the Muses, because I did not complete one uninterrupted song . . . about kings . . . or heroes in thousands of lines but instead like a child roll out a tiny tale" (fr. 1.1–5 Pf). A little later he describes how Apollo advised him to keep his Muse thin, and to "walk on untrodden paths" (23–28). The scholia to the *Aetia* prologue (1 p. 3 Pf) identify the Telchines as seven specific poets, but Apollonius is not on that list, and there does not appear to be room for his name on the papyrus. But according to his *Suda* entry, Callimachus wrote "a poem distinguished for its obscurity and abuse against a certain Ibos who was an enemy of Callimachus—this was Apollonius who wrote the *Voyage of the Argo* (*Argonautica*)" (Kappa 227 = T1.13–15 Pf). No reason for the attack is given in the *Suda*, but an epigram attributed to "Apollonius the grammarian" says that "Callimachus is refuse; triviality, a wooden mind; the causer (*aitios*) is he who wrote the Causes (*Aitia*), Callimachus" (13 Powell = *FGE* 53–54 = T 25 Pf).[3] Then there is also the famous comment, "Callimachus the grammarian said a big book is like a big evil" (fr. 465 Pf), which in fact does not refer specifically to the work of Apollonius or any other particular poet. It may well be that Callimachus was only referring to the comparative sizes of book rolls.[4] But if the remark was intended to apply to a particular work, the most famous long poem of the day was Apollonius' *Voyage of the Argo*, which is in length equivalent to eight books of Homer.

The two poets were connected with each other because Callimachus was said to have been Apollonius' teacher, but Apollonius' epic poem initially failed to please its audience. According to the first of the ancient *Lives of Apollonius* that are preserved in the manuscripts of his epic poem *The Voyage of the Argo*:[5] "At first he kept company with Callimachus, his own teacher, and after a long time turned to writing poetry. It is said that when he was an ephebe he held a public reading of *The Voyage of the Argo* and was adversely criticized for it. Because he was unable to bear the obloquy from the citizens and the slander of the other poets, he left his fatherland and went into exile in Rhodes, and there he polished and improved his poems and so held a public reading and was very well-received (*Vit.* A 8–11)." According to the second *Vita*, Apollonius was a scholar, who "was a pupil (*mathētes*) of Callimachus in Alexandria, wrote his poems and recited them. But because he failed miserably and was embarrassed, he went to Rhodes" (*Vit.* B 5–7). This *Vita* offers a different happy ending from that of *Vita* A: "some say he went back to Alexandria and recited his

poem once again and was held in highest regard, so that he was thought worthy of the libraries and the Mouseion and buried next to Callimachus himself" (*Vit.* B 11–14).

Even though the notion of animosity between Callimachus and Apollonius is largely based on inference, and we have no information about exactly when the two poets' works were composed, some scholars have supposed that (among other things) Apollonius had borrowed from Callimachus the notion of writing about causes (*aitia*), along with numerous lines and phrases, though in an uncomprehending fashion.[6] Could Callimachus, an aristocratic Cyrenean (*Epigr.* 21 Pf = 1179–82 *HE*) have been contemptuous of Apollonius' origins?[7] Did Callimachus object to the *kind* of poetry that Apollonius wrote?[8] In recent years, perhaps to some extent as the result of my earlier discussions of this issue, some scholars have downplayed the importance of the so-called quarrel, or even doubted that it ever existed.[9] But others are still unwilling to acknowledge that the data about this apparent literary feud derives from the same kind of sources as the biographies of other poets, such as anecdotes that have their origins in poetry by and about Callimachus and Apollonius. Unfortunately, it is not possible to trace precisely how the story of the quarrel developed, nor can it be consistently traced to any particular ancient biographer; and even when we know the name of an ancient scholar connected with the story, his individual motives remain obscure.

Nonetheless, judging from the quality of the biographical data discussed elsewhere in this book, I believe it more likely that the story of the quarrel developed through that curious process of objectification characteristic of ancient biographical scholarship, which took humor seriously and transformed conventional metaphor into literal fact. More than that, the story of the quarrel provides an emblematic illustration of why it is important to be skeptical about the historicity of literary biography, and why such information cannot serve as a reliable guide to the understanding or interpretation of ancient poetry. The notion that Callimachus was particularly critical of Apollonius ultimately derived from biographical interpretation of first-person statements in Callimachus' own poetry. Such pronouncements, as we have seen, are particularly susceptible to misunderstanding. In Pindar's combative references to unspecified others, ancient commentators supplied the names of specific individuals, for instance, Bacchylides or Simonides, even though in the original poem the poet's opponents were described only as athletes, jackdaws, "shrill-voiced birds," or as a "pair of crows."[10] Such statements of authorial preeminence are conventional; all archaic poets use them.[11] Their function is

to show the essential superiority of the "I" who is making them. In his *parabaseis* Aristophanes repeatedly informs his audiences, through the voice of his chorus, that he is not only a better poet but more elegant and less crude than his contemporaries (e.g., *Ach.* 629, *Eq.* 507, *Nub.* 518, *Vesp.* 1015, *Pax* 734, *Ran.* 12–15). As we have seen, these claims emerge in Aristophanes' *Vita* as literary history.

At the end of his *Hymn to Apollo* Callimachus compares himself favorably to unnamed critics, whom, in Pindaric fashion, he describes only in metaphorical terms:[12] "Envy [*Phthonos*] said secretly in Apollo's ear: 'I do not admire the bard whose song is not even as great as the sea.' Apollo kicked Envy aside and said as follows: 'The Assyrian river's flow is great, but it carries along much refuse from the land and much filth in its waters. The bees do not bring to Demeter water from every spring, but the water that a clear and undefiled tiny spray sends up from a holy fountain, the very best water'" (105–112). Here the god Envy seems to disapprove of the poet who did not write a song as long as (say) the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, which Thucydides (iii.104.4–5) regarded as a unity and thought was composed by the author of the *Iliad*. Apollo, the greater of the two gods, responds with a gesture of contempt. He kicks Envy aside and ignores his contention, on the grounds that no one can match Homer.[13] Instead, Apollo responds to Envy by stating that a river like the Euphrates is big, but full of mud and refuse, while the small stream retains the purity of its origins. He suggests that indiscriminately ambitious poems compare less favorably with Homer than a poem on a small scale that retains an essence of the original, like the "clear and undefiled" spring that Callimachus implies is his own *Hymn to Apollo*; Pindar refers to his poetry as "the holy water of Dirce" (*Isthm.* 6.74).[14] In having Apollo make this comparison between the river and the spring, Callimachus does not specify what makes his hymn retain its purity or exactly whose song could be compared to the Assyrian river. He might be referring to the performance of the song.[15] If he means the song itself, he might have had in mind an epic like the *Cypria*, which was big (eleven books) and, in comparison with Homer, unheroic and diffuse.[16] Callimachus might have been thinking of Homer's competitor Creophylus of Samos, the author of the *Sack of Oichalia* (*Epigr.* 6 Pf = 1293–96 *HE*), but he chooses not to say. His point is, rather, that his small hymn, for whatever reason, is closer to the source.[17]

But where Callimachus speaks generally and allusively, the scholia to the end of Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo* offer a more mechanical interpretation, equating the sea with the "big stream" of the Euphrates River: "On account

of this [not singing a song as great as the sea], he criticizes those who made fun of him for not being able to write a big (*mega*) poem, for which reason he was compelled to write the *Hecalē*" (schol. *Hymn* 2.106 = T37 Pf). Here again we see how ancient commentators characteristically sought out ways to particularize what poets deliberately phrased metaphorically. Pindar also speaks of envy, in his victory odes, but like Callimachus he does not specify whether those who express envy are other poets nor does he say exactly what they envy (e.g., *Nem.* 4.36–41, *Pyth.* 2.88–92). He calls attention to the need for due measure in praise, speaks of triumphing over nameless and envious "enemies." But the scholia do specify: "This seems to pertain to Simonides, since he liked to use digressions" (schol. *Nem.* 4.60b). When Pindar claims that he did not "savage Neoptolemus in ruthless words" by telling the myth about his sacking Apollo's temple, Aristodemus, a third-century scholar, specified that Pindar was apologizing to the Aeginetans for what he said about Neoptolemus in his *Paeans* (schol. *Nem.* 7.150a).

When Callimachus begins his epic *Aetia* by complaining about the Telchines, it is without giving any hint of whom he might have in mind: "Telchines chatter about me in song, ignorant men, who are not friends of the Muse" (fr. 1.1 Pf). He explains that the Telchines complain that Callimachus' song (i.e., the present poem, the *Aetia*) is not an epic (i.e., a continuous story thousands of lines long about kings and heroes) because he tells "a tiny tale, like a child" even though he is an old man. As in his *Hymn to Apollo*, Callimachus chooses to define his work by referring to unnamed and hostile critics. Here again he is following a long authorial tradition. The pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus, in what has been taken to be the prologue of his work, speaks of other men as "unable to understand" (*axynetoi,* 22 B 1 DK). Pindar speaks of other poets, "like a pair of crows talking words not to be fulfilled against Zeus' sacred bird" (*Ol.* 2.87–88). Callimachus does not explain why he characterizes his critics as Telchines, who were said to have been the first inhabitants of Rhodes, wizards, jealous of teaching their skills to others (Diod. Sic. v.55.1–3); they were put to death on Ceos by the gods for their *hybris* (Callim. fr. 75.64–65 Pf).[18]

Callimachus answers the Telchines' complaints with ironic exaggeration: Someone else can sing epic themes; "little nightingales" sing more sweetly (16). The Telchines, the race of the "evil eye" (*baskanië*) should go away; poetry should be judged by art, not by length; he does not make a big noise, because it is Zeus' job to thunder (17–20). Callimachus concludes his own defense by saying that he has been following advice Apollo gave him when he began to write poetry: "Fatten sacrificial victims but keep the Muse thin" (23–24). This

defense of his style has an analogue in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, where Euripides speaks of putting tragedy on a diet after she had been stuffed with Aeschylus' heavy words (*Ran.* 939–41).[19] A few lines later in the *Aetia* prologue, Apollo commands Callimachus: "Do not walk on wagon roads, or drive your chariot in other's ruts along the wide road, but stay on the narrow path" (25–28); Pindar advises his chorus to "sing songs of praise, not by going down the worn wagon-road of Homer, but with different horses" (fr. 52b.2; cf. *Pyth.* 4.247). Callimachus claims that he sings among those who like the shrill voice of cicadas, not the braying of asses (29–30). Then he expresses the wish that through his song, he can become a cicada himself, so that he can shed his old age (32–41). This claim appears to be another literary allusion, specifically to the biographical tradition about Hesiod's vigorous old age. According to the epigram attributed to Pindar, Hesiod "was a young man twice" (*FGE* 582–83).[20]

By alluding to Aristophanes, Pindar, and Hesiod, Callimachus indicates that he is talking as a poet about his claims for his art. The allusions also convey with great economy what he means the *Aetia* to be, as elegant and light as Aristophanes' idea of Euripides' verse, as original as Pindar's, and as immortal (or significant) as Hesiod's. The description of the muttering Telchines makes a dramatic introduction to the prologue. The imaginary dialogue provides more excitement than a simple narrative about his work would have done. It is important to remember that the Telchines and his reply to them, like Apollo's speech, represent a fictitious situation. Like the first-person statements in Pindar's victory odes, which inspired it, the *Aetia* prologue was not a report of an actual historical event.[21]

Although Callimachus does not connect the Telchines with any specific individuals—apparently he was interested in literary questions rather than specific litterateurs[22]—the ancient commentators whose ideas are preserved in the scholia do provide specific names: the two Dionysii, Asclepiades, Posidippus, the orator . . . yrippus, and Praxiphanes of Mytilene.[23] We do not know anything about the Dionysii or the orator, but I would suggest that Asclepiades and Posidippus appear in the list because they were thought to have alluded to Callimachus in their poetry. Biographers were eager to establish connections between famous poets, like Sappho and Alcaeus, and even Sappho and Anacreon.[24] There is an epigram ascribed to Asclepiades or Posidippus describing young men in a brothel as "colts of the night now snorting" (*hesperinōn pōlōn arti phryassomenōn,* = Asclepiades 977 *HE*).[25] That phrase was said to be a parody of Callimachus' description, in his *Hymn to Athena*, of the sacred horses sensing the presence of the approaching goddess (*tan hippōn arti phryasso-*

menān, 2).[26] Scholars have assumed that Callimachus resented Asclepiades' (or Posidippus') adaptation in an obscene poem of a phrase from his *Hymn to Athena,* but this is to suppose that Callimachus would have regarded the adaptation as parody. Callimachus might equally well have regarded the phrase as an amusing compliment, if indeed he himself, with his elegant irony, did not adapt the line from Asclepiades or Posidippus.

Another reason why Asclepiades and Posidippus might have appeared on the ancient commentators' list of Telchines is that they wrote epigrams praising Antimachus' poem *Lydē*. In the *Aetia* prologue, Callimachus says that sacrificial victims should be "as fat as possible" (*pachiston*) but the Muse should stay thin. To characterize the *Lydē*, he used the same word, "fat" (*pachu*), in an epigram from which only a phrase survives: "The *Lydē* is a fat book (*gramma*) and not lucid" (fr. 398 Pf = Antimachus T 15 Matthews).[27] The verbal correspondence may have suggested a link between the *Lydē* and Callimachus' disdain for "bloated poetry." The epigram criticizing the *Lydē* could then be seen as answering (or being answered by) the laudatory epigrams about the *Lydē* attributed to Asclepiades or Posidippus.[28] But we do not know the context in which Callimachus' judgment of the *Lydē* was uttered; it might possibly have come from a humorous context and need not have been meant more seriously than his witty epigram about the Samian epic poet Creophylus (*Epigr.* 6 Pf = 1293–96 *HE*), the author of *The Sack of Oechalia*, which Callimachus also refers to as a *gramma*.[29] Whatever the original intention of the line may have been, in practice Callimachus seems to have employed some of the more recherché terms in the *Lydē*. He also seems to have followed Antimachus' lead in referring to arcane names and customs in Homer.[30] According to the first-century B.C. scholar Philodemus, Callimachus "took over" (*metalabōn*) Antimachus' version of Zeus' passion for the goddess Leto, perhaps from the *Lydē* itself, since it is the story of a love affair (T 16 Matthews).[31]

The commentators listed Praxiphanes of Mytilene among the Telchines because Callimachus was said to have written a work *against* him: "Callimachus mentioned Aratus not only in his epigrams but in his *Against Praxiphanes*, praising [Aratus] as a learned man and an excellent poet" (fr. 460 Pf = Prax. fr. 16 Wehrli). No other fragment of this work survives, but Pfeiffer suggested that it was a prose monograph, like Apollonius' *Against Zenodotus*.[32] That lost work appears to have concerned readings in Homer, so that by analogy *Against Praxiphanes* might have involved assessment of other poets, like Aratus.[33] Callimachus in his poetry appears to have defended passages selected for deletion ("obelized") by other scholars.[34] Praxiphanes (fr. 20 Wehrli) was criticized by

Aristarchus for being "surprised" that Odysseus, during his visit to the world of the dead, asked his mother's shade about Telemachus and Penelope "only at the end of his speech" (*Od.* 11.174–75). But even though the existence of *Against Praxiphanes* explains Praxiphanes' presence on the scholia list, there is no ancient evidence that Praxiphanes himself complained about Callimachus. It is possible that, like other members of the "School of Aristotle," Praxiphanes might have approved of the long epics that Callimachus says he did not want to write.[35] It has also been suggested that Callimachus opposed Praxiphanes because they disagreed in their assessment of Plato. Praxiphanes' attitude toward the Athenian philosopher could be inferred to be favorable, because Praxiphanes wrote a dialogue *On Poems* or *On Poets* that featured Plato and Isocrates as characters.[36] Callimachus, on the other hand, is said to have considered Plato a poor judge of poetry (fr. 589). But here again we may be in danger of demanding too much from the kind of evidence that is provided in the summaries and excerpts that have come down to us. Praxiphanes wrote a dialogue that took place "at a country house with Plato entertaining Isocrates" (fr. 11 Wehrli).[37] In addition to what Plato and Isocrates said about each other in their writings, Praxiphanes had access to characterizations of Plato in comedy; at least twelve references to Plato survive in the fragments of fourth-century plays.[38] Just because Praxiphanes wrote a dialogue about Plato, there is no reason to think that his interlocutors' views were any more consistently complimentary than, say, the views about Euripides expressed by Satyrus' interlocutors in his dialogue about Euripides' life.[39] The historian Duris of Samos (ca. 340–260 B.C.) shared Callimachus' negative opinion of Plato's attitude toward poetry (*FGrHist* 76 F 83), and Duris drew his information from peripatetics like Praxiphanes.[40]

The notion that Praxiphanes was a critic of Callimachus provides another illustration of how the literary commentary of the third century, although originally humorous and allusive, came to be portrayed as malicious disputes in the second century and later. Plato and Xenophon's different accounts of the education of Cyrus were adduced as evidence of rivalry between them (Herodicus of Babylon *ap.* Athenaeus xi.504e), even though the passage that Herodicus cites from Plato's *Laws* (iii.694c) concerns the education not of Cyrus himself but of his children.[41] Callimachus and Aristarchus came to be portrayed as pedants by biographers like Herodicus (*FGE* 233–38 = *Supp.Hell.* 494), if only in order to build up the value of their own poetic efforts.[42] The "obscurity" and "abuse" of Callimachus' *Ibis* (T 1.13–15 Pf) would have made it appealing source material for biographers. But that does not necessarily indicate that

they had any means of knowing that the Ibos against whom it was specifically directed was in fact Apollonius, rather than someone else.[43] If other supposed identifications were based on conjecture, why not this one? Why would they (or we) be able definitively to identify the Telchines, or for that matter Ibos, when we still do not know who Ovid's *Ibis* might have been?[44]

Unlike Callimachus, Apollonius says nothing about himself in his first-person statements in the *Voyage of the Argo*.[45] The biographical information that we have about him comes from the two biographies preserved in the manuscripts of his epic. The first of these is based on the work of the grammarian Theon, who lived in Alexandria during the reign of Augustus (27 B.C.–14 A.D.) and who wrote commentaries also on Callimachus, Nicander, Theocritus, and Lycophron. The second Apollonius *Vita* is also based on Theon's commentary. Its author was probably a grammarian called Sophocleius, who lived toward the end of the second century A.D. Both *Vitae* were further condensed and revised some centuries later.[46] Theon or whoever wrote the original *Vita* would have known from other biographies that famous poets like Homer and Euripides went into exile because the citizens (or rulers) of their own cities became angry at them.[47] The biographers' other data came from inference. As we have seen in ancient literary biographies, "pupil" and "teacher" became metaphors for a perceived connection between two authors based on similarities in their works.[48] Both *Vitae* and the *Suda* (Alpha 3419) say that Apollonius was Callimachus' pupil (*mathētēs*). The compiler of *Vita* A says Apollonius "kept company with (*synōn*) his own teacher Callimachus." *Vita* B says that he was "buried alongside Callimachus." The papyrus list of librarians (*POxy* 1241 = T 13 Pf) also states that Apollonius was a close associate of Callimachus (*gnōrimos*).[49]

Neither *Vita* mentions any particular intellectual adversaries, but both say that he left Alexandria for Rhodes because of adverse criticism of his poetry. In *Vita* A, Apollonius left Alexandria because "he was unable to bear the obloquy from the citizens and the slander of the other poets" after he presented his epic poem, the *Voyage of the Argo*. In *Vita* B, Apollonius went to Rhodes "because he was particularly unlucky and embarrassed" after he produced "these poems," that is, the *Voyage of the Argo*. In both *Vitae*, Apollonius polished and improved his poems in Rhodes before returning to Alexandria. Theon or his sources may have supposed that he broke the usual pattern of poetic exile because of a special circumstance. They needed to explain why (unusually) there were two versions of the text of the *Voyage of the Argo*.[50] The so-called "first edition" (*proekdosis*) of the *Voyage of the Argo* is mentioned in the scholia to

Apollonius in connection with six sets of variant lines in Book I (285–86, 516–20, 543, 726–27, 788–89, 801–3). Variants are also preserved in cross-references in the scholia to two passages in Book II (963–64, 1116), making a total of 19 lines.[51]

The story of exile in Rhodes also explains why Apollonius, despite his close association with Callimachus and Alexandria, was always known as "the Rhodian." The compiler of Apollonius' *Vita* A states that "in origin (*to genos*) Apollonius was an Alexandrian of the Ptolemaic tribe," one of the artificial tribes created by Ptolemy I Soter. Compiler A says that Apollonius was accepted as a citizen of Rhodes because "he polished and improved his poems and so held a public reading and was very well-received. For that reason he put his name down as Apollonius of Rhodes. He was a famous teacher in Rhodes and was awarded citizenship and honor by the city of Rhodes." According to the compiler of *Vita* B, "he lived as a citizen in Rhodes and taught rhetoric there; that is why they wanted to call him 'Rhodian.'" Biographers came up with a similar story to explain why comic poets had claimed that Aristophanes came from Aegina (his family owned property there) or even from Rhodes, Lindos, Egypt, or Camirus, although Aristophanes presented himself in his plays as an Athenian citizen, and his identity as such is confirmed by an inscription. But since biographers usually preferred not to distinguish among the different sources, they came up with the explanation that Aristophanes "was made an Athenian, for he was enrolled (*epolitographēthē*) by them as a citizen" (*Suda* Alpha 3932 = T 2b KA, *PCG* III.2, 4). In Apollonius' case, they preferred not to reach the obvious conclusion, which was that Apollonius actually came from Rhodes, as his toponymic "of Rhodes" would suggest. The idea that Apollonius became a famous teacher of rhetoric in Rhodes may derive from confusion on the part of an earlier biographer between the author of the *Voyage of the Argo* and the first-century Apollonius of Alabanda, who taught rhetoric in Rhodes.[52] In the papyrus list of librarians in Alexandria, Apollonius is an "Alexandrian known as a Rhodian" (*Alexandrios ho kaloumenos Rhodios*, *POxy* 1241, col. ii.i = T 13 Pf). Strabo also gives him a dual nationality: "Dionysius the Thracian and Apollonius who wrote the *Voyage of the Argo*, although both Alexandrians, were called Rhodians" (*Geography* 14.3.13). Dionysius taught in Rhodes after he was exiled from Alexandria in 144 B.C.

The problem of Apollonius' sobriquet is illustrative of biographical methodology. Biographers knew the literary texts, but they did not have easy access to the kinds of data on which modern historians rely, such as catalogues of inscriptional evidence. If they had had such information, they would have

found that, in the third century, Rhodians who lived in Alexandria appear to have been known as "so-and-so of Rhodes" (e.g., *Alexikrates Rhodios*, *Dromares Rhodius*, *Pausistratos Rhodios*, *Demetrios Rhodios*).[53] Most Greeks who came to Alexandria from cities elsewhere, including all the leading literary men who were invited there and subsidized by Ptolemy I Soter, refused to give up the epithets that designated their origins.[54] Close association with a city other than one's birthplace usually resulted in one's being known by the names of *both* one's native and adoptive cities. The Stoic philosopher Posidonius is listed in the *Suda* as "of Apamea in Syria or of Rhodes," where he kept a school of philosophy (Pi 2107).[55] In some cases biographers also appear to have assumed that poets physically spent time in the places that they wrote about. According to his *Suda* entry, some biographers called Nicander of Colophon "Aetolian" (Nu 374). The author of his manuscript *Vita* explains: "[Nicander] spent time in Aetolia, *as is evident* (*hōs phaneron*) from his writings and poems about Aetolia." Athenaeus calls Apollonius not an Alexandrian but a "Rhodian or Naucratite" (vii.283d–e). Did Athenaeus suppose that Apollonius came from Naucratis because Apollonius wrote a poem about the foundation of Naucratis, or was he claiming him for Naucratis out of patriotism, because Athenaeus himself came from there?[56]

Biographers not only needed to account for Apollonius' toponym "the Rhodian"; they needed to supply the names of his parents. What more appropriate name could be found for the mother of Apollonius of Rhodes than Rhode ("Rosie")?[57] They appear to have found his father's name in poetry by or about Apollonius, because the names they provide, Silleus or Illeus, are unique and both are connected with the word *sillos*, a poetic lampoon or satire about particular individuals; ancient scholars thought that *sillos* was derived from *illos*, "squint."[58] Archilochus' mother was said to be Enipo, from *enipē*, "abuse" (Critias 88 B 4 DK). Perhaps Apollonius called himself (or was called) the "son of Satire" in a lost poem.[59] The name may suggest a connection with the skeptic philosopher Timon, whose work seems to have influenced the characterization of heroic action in the *Voyage of the Argo*.[60] If Apollonius of Rhodes wrote or was thought to have written *silloi*, it would explain why the nasty epigram that calls Callimachus "a wooden mind" (13 Powell = *FGE* 53–54 = T 25 Pf) was attributed to him. But since, in the *Voyage of the Argo*, Apollonius frequently alludes to Callimachus' *Aetia*, would he have chosen to write about his friend such an inelegantly critical poem as that epigram, even in the context of a symposium?[61]

In time, biographers lost track of Apollonius' precise dates. *Vita* A says that

"he lived in the reign of Ptolemy [III] Euergetes," 246–221 B.C., which fits with the idea of Apollonius' having known Callimachus. The same chronology is given in his *Suda* entry, which adds that he was Eratosthenes' successor as librarian of the Alexandrian library (Alpha 3419). But the papyrus list of librarians dating from the second or third century A.D. makes him Eratosthenes' *predecessor:* "He was the teacher of the first [*sic*] Ptolemy [I Soter]; Eratosthenes succeeded him" (*POxy* 1241, col. ii.i = T 13 Pf). Ptolemy I ruled from 305–285 B.C., which seems too early to make Apollonius a contemporary, much less a pupil of Callimachus. Another possibility is that the person who copied the papyrus list of librarians read "first" (*prōtou*) instead of "fifth" (*pemptou*) in his manuscript. But the dates of Ptolemy V Epiphanes (205–180 B.C.) would make sense only for Apollonius of Alexandria, known as the Eidographer, who succeeded Aristophanes of Byzantium as librarian (*POxy* 1241 col. ii.9–11 = T 13 Pf).[62] Given the contradictory and imprecise nature of the biographical data, it seems unwise to try to suppose that we could date the poems of Callimachus and Apollonius with precision, or to imagine that we can understand exactly what their contemporaries thought of them or of their work.[63]

Why did ancient biographers choose to think of Callimachus and Apollonius as enemies and to emphasize Apollonius' discomfiture and exile, rather than preserve the kind of information we would now prefer to have: an exact account of their early lives and educations, along with a precise chronology of their careers and motivations for writing their respective works? The answer may be that they preferred to write about the kind of events, real or imaginary, that enabled them best to explain why, despite obvious affinities between the two poets' writings, Callimachus' poetry appeared to them to be the more admired and to have had the wider influence on later poetry. For them, biography was exemplary, a narrative form of literary criticism. The story of the quarrel offers a ready explanation of what Callimachus had in mind when he spoke in mythical and metaphorical terms about his critics, and it creates a literary world that bristles with drama and excitement. Unfortunately, the notion of a quarrel appears to have sidelined what the ancient biographers said about the positive side of the two poets' relationship. They realized that Apollonius had Callimachus in mind when he wrote his epic.[64] A sympathetic reading of Apollonius' poetry shows how closely he was connected with Callimachus, through his interest in *aitia*, in geography, in religious practices, and in the careful crafting of his verse, which, like Callimachus', does not rely on epic formulae.[65] In the ancient world, such *imitatio* or deliberate recollection

would have been understood as a compliment, not as a sign of plagiarism or lack of inventiveness.[66] We still agree with the ancient biographers who judged Callimachus to be the greater poet of the two, but by giving prominence to the story of Apollonius' initial failure and his supposed differences with Callimachus, their biographical narratives have kept readers from judging Apollonius' work on its own merits and from fully appreciating the considerable influence he had on other poets, such as Vergil.[67]

Fortunately for literary history, the ancient biographies of other Hellenistic poets have had less appeal to modern scholars. But these other Lives still hold considerable interest for students of biography, because they display the same tendencies that we have seen repeatedly in the Lives of other poets. As always, ancient biographers were dealt an incomplete hand of cards, and they had to extract such information as they could from the poems of the authors whose biographies they were trying to write and from contemporary poetry about them. The compilers of Theocritus' Lives record that his father was Praxagoras or Simichos. The name Simichos was suggested, as the compiler of the Byzantine Life notes, because in the *Idylls* he calls himself Simichidas ("son of Simichos," *Id.* 7.21). Biographers encountered similar problems when they attempted to determine the name of the poet Nicander's father. The compiler of the Byzantine *Vita* of Nicander identifies the poet as the son of Damaeus, a priest of Apollo at Claros, near the city of Colophon in Asia Minor. His source for that information is Nicander's own verse (*Theriaca* 958; *Alexipharmaka* 11). But the compiler of Nicander's *Suda* biography (Nu 374) calls Nicander "the son of Xenophanes, a Colophonian, or according to some authorities, an Aetolian." It was certainly logical (but chronologically impossible!) to try to connect a poet who wrote about medicines with the famous fifth-century pre-Socratic philosopher Xenophanes. The author of the *Suda* entry does not try to explain why some authorities thought of Nicander as an Aetolian, but the compiler of Nicander's *Vita* explains that Nicander was associated with Aetolia by a Dionysius of Phaselis and other biographers because he spent a long time there, to judge from the frequent references in his poetry to that region of mainland Greece. Adding to the confusion about Nicander's background is the fact that neither the compiler of the *Vita* nor the author of the *Suda* entry for Nicander seems to be aware that there were two Nicanders, one who was active around 280–250 B.C. and the other, active around 200.[68] The first Nicander has been identified as the son of Anaxagoras in an inscription of 254/3 at Delphi (*Syll.*[3] 452).[69] The compiler of the *Suda* entry assigns to the younger

Nicander all works written under that same name. Most scholars agree on the basis of style and content that it was the younger of the two who wrote the *Theriaka* and the *Alexipharmaka*.[70]

Vita A of Aratus in particular is much longer than those of Apollonius and provides information about Aratus' family, his tutors, his contemporaries (he was an older contemporary of Callimachus), and his association with Antigonos Gonatas, the king of Macedonia from 277/6 to 239 B.C., who gave him the assignment of writing the *Phaenomena*. The compiler of this *Vita* cites poetry about Aratus as his source material. He quotes Callimachus' epigram about Aratus twice, once to confirm that he came from Soloi, and again to confirm that Aratus was an "imitator" (*zēlōtēs*) of Hesiod (*Epigr.* 27 Pf = 1297–1300 *HE*). The compiler also cites an epigram about writers of *Phaenomena* by Ptolemy (712 *Supp.Hell.* = *FGE* 311–14), though he does not specify which Ptolemy.[71] The compiler of *Vita* A of Aratus shows common sense in discarding implausible material, such as a grammarian's suggestion that the poet came from Tarsus, when Callimachus says he came from Soloi. In addition, the compiler says that he consulted Aratus' letters, which he considers to be genuine. These letters have not survived, but the compiler of *Vita* A notes that "Apollonides the Cephean [*sic*] in the eighth book of his *On False History* says that the letters were not written by Aratus, but by Sabirus [*sic*] Polio; he said that the same man wrote the letters of Euripides." If the scholar mentioned is the same person as the grammarian Apollonides of Nicaea, and P. *Sabidius* Pollio is the author of Aratus' letters, they were written no earlier than the mid-first century A.D., some three centuries after Aratus' *floruit*.[72] If the letters were not by Aratus, and if their character was similar to that of the letters of Euripides (T 100 Kovacs), their author would have sought to reconstruct Aratus' relationship with Antigonus and have made use of the names of some of Aratus' contemporaries, known from his own works, or what those writers said about him in theirs.[73] But the letters would also have contained fictional matter that in turn would have made its way into *Vita* A of Aratus, such as the story about how Antigonus encouraged Aratus to write a poem based on Eudoxus' astronomical handbook the *Mirror*.[74]

So, it seems that biographers of Aratus and Nicander did not necessarily have access to better information than did the biographers of other poets. Like their predecessors, they mined such biographical information as they could find from the poets' own writings and from references to the poets by their contemporaries. When they encountered names that were shared by

more than one well-known person, they were sometimes unable to select the right person from the likely choices: hence the confusions among Ptolemies, Apollonii, and Nicandri. When confronted with obscurities, they preferred to conjecture from inference. Biographers knew most about the poets who talk about themselves in their poetry, but they necessarily became more inventive in the cases of poets like Apollonius, where they needed to fill in the blank spaces themselves. Like Apollonius' biographers, we do not know the real names of his parents. We do not know for sure if he was a native of Rhodes or a naturalized citizen, a native of Alexandria, or if he went into voluntary exile. We do not know exactly when Apollonius published the *Voyage of the Argo* or when Callimachus published the *Aetia* prologue or who influenced whom or in what order.

Rather than try to write a precise chronology of intellectual life in third-century Alexandria, we should devote our energies to appreciating what we do have: the poems themselves, and the subjects that the poets chose to write about, especially those of the poets who found themselves in Egypt, rediscovering the myths and the geography of a Greek world they could never have seen in its entirety in their lives. The *Eclogues* and *Georgics* show that Vergil studied Callimachus.[75] But there is much in the *Aeneid* that indicates that he also knew Apollonius well and was inspired by his work.[76] Vergil could have learned from either Callimachus or Apollonius how to evoke a Homeric context,[77] but it was in Apollonius' narrative that he could observe how to indicate by reminiscence the relation between events.[78] In his assessment of Apollonius' poetry, Vergil was not guided by the speculations of his predecessors' biographers; what mattered to him was the poetry itself. As Callimachus wrote about the death of his friend Heraclitus, it is the poems that have endured; not the mortal beings who composed them (*Epigr.* 2 Pf = 1203–8 *HE*). Those sentiments could serve as a motto for the whole of the present book.

Conclusion

The Lives of the Greek poets provide a vivid illustration of the problems modern scholars confront when trying to reconstruct ancient literary history. Ancient literary biographies, whatever their date and length, do not preserve the kinds of historical data modern biographers have hoped to find in them. The Lives preserve only hints of what biographers now seek to know: why the poets wrote, how they worked, and what their intentions might have been towards each other. Although any individual Life, seen in isolation, might contain some data that sound at least plausible, I hope that this survey of Lives has shown that many of the presumed "facts" reported in the Lives are the products of inference and invention. For the most part, ancient biographers deduced what they could from the poets' works or from what other poets said about them. In their search for data, biographers transformed jokes into serious criticism, fantasies into facts, and metaphors into realities. When they saw echoes of one poet's writings in another's, they represented them as pupil and teacher. They scrutinzed a poet's work, harvesting names of people and places, in the hope that information might be revealed about his family and background, only to come up with confusing and conflicting answers, for which new and often ingenious explanations had to be constructed. Why in an epigram does Homer curse a pine tree? Because he was struck on the head by a pine cone. Why in the *parabaseis* of his comedies does Aristophanes speak of himself as if he were an Athenian citizen, even though other comic poets said he was a foreigner? Because a special law had been passed granting him citizenship. Biographers almost always understood the creative process to be

directly connected with the poet's life experience. Mentes appears in the *Odyssey* because he had entertained the young Homer in Ithaca. Euripides wrote the *Hippolytus* because his wife had been unfaithful.

The nature of the source material at the disposal of biographers helped to determine the ways in which they could shape the structure and contents of individual Lives. Sometimes biographers followed the patterns of heroic myth, but without suggesting that poets literally possessed the divine backgrounds or physical powers of the old heroes of myth. There are elements of folktale in some Lives, and stories of rejection and exile in many *Vitae*. The talent of some poets is marked by portents in childhood. Some poets acquire heroic stature. Homer in some narratives has a divine parent; his death was predicted by an oracle, as if to indicate that the gods had a particular interest in his fate, as well as that of Hesiod, Archilochus, Pindar, and Aeschylus. Some poets have deaths that are emblematic of an aspect of their lives. Because Euripides was accused by the comic poets of impiety, he is said to have died in a manner suitable for an atheist and his death is linked to a narrative that provides an etiology for the expression "there is justice even for a dog." Other poets die in an unremarkable manner, without being rejected or exiled, in the cities in which they lived. That the biographies do not follow any one standard pattern or template indicates that they were created on an ad hoc basis and were closely dependent on the source materials the biographers had at their disposal.

If we had the longer biographies from which our present Lives were excerpted, we might be able to say more about the biographers' goals and intentions. In the rare cases in which we still possess a biographer's own words, as in the case of Satyrus' *Life of Euripides*, the original presents a far more diverse and balanced picture of the poet's work and intellectual achievement than the later excerpted *Vitae* preserved in the manuscripts or in the *Suda*. We can see in the Pseudo-Herodotean Life of Homer that the author sought to represent his subject as a man of the people and to emphasize the hardships that he endured in the course of his difficult life. A few biographers disagree with their predecessors on events or express approval of their subject's work or way of life. But in most cases, all sense of the biographer's character has been removed by the long and untraceable process of excerpting and condensation. Apollonius' two biographers, although apparently working from the same archetype, offer slightly different portraits of the poet's life, and each leaves out details that the other preserves, but little sense of a shaping intelligence remains in either *Vita*, or indeed in most of the shorter Lives.

As time went on, biographers began to place more emphasis on prose nar-

rative and physical description and less on the poet's actual words. In his inscription in Archilochus' *hērōion* on Paros in the second century B.C., Sosthenes provided his own summary of Archilochus' war poetry. The Pseudo-Herodotean *Life of Homer* concentrates on the poet's physical suffering, his epigrams, and his minor poems but says very little about the composition of his greatest works, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In the end, tangible representations, statues, tombs, or mementos like Pindar's chair or Euripides' writing stylus would provide mute testimony to the power of verses that fewer and fewer onlookers had actually heard or read.

It may seem the cruelest irony that incomparable verbal achievement comes to be represented only in physical form. But at least the statues and relics provide a form of tribute, a sign that even when archaic language was no longer generally understood and the poets' dramas were no longer performed, people who no longer read the poets' works still remained aware that these figures of the past deserved to be remembered. In the village of Pityos today, on the island of Chios, people remember that Homer stayed there on his way from the port city to Volissos on the west coast, and they know that Homer traveled there because of the story told in the Pseudo-Herodotean Life. Few have read Homer in the ancient Greek, but most will have heard some verses in translation. For them, a marble slab commemorates the poet's visit to their town. It provides a tangible and immediate tribute, like a tombstone for a dead parent, dearly paid for over time.

Thus, for ordinary people, the Lives in their different ways preserve a sense of both the poets' importance and the critical judgments on them passed on by the experts. Homer's travels explained that certain of his works and verses were thought to be authentic. Stories of discipleship offered some idea of the intellectual climate in which the different poets worked. Anecdotes preserved an impression of how well a poet was known and appreciated, like the story told by both Satyrus (F 6 fr. 39 xix Schorn) and Plutarch (*Nic.* 29) about the Syracusans who spared the lives of Athenian soldiers because they could recite the latest dramas by Euripides. The anecdotes in Aristophanes' *Vita* about his battles with Cleon pay tribute to the intellectual freedom of the fifth century as well as to Aristophanes' own courage. References in epigrams to literary disputes in Alexandria, however exaggerated, convey an idea of how important scholarship was to the poets of Callimachus' day.

We might have retained a clearer sense of the original value of the *Vitae* and anecdotes had more biographers been like Plutarch, whose empathy and historical judgment imparted substance and meaning to the subjects of his

Parallel Lives. But in literary biography, as we have seen, a derisive tendency predominates, in part because so much of the biographers' material is drawn from comedy and satirical verse. Inevitably but consistently, the biographies in their final forms offer simple and even demeaning portraits of the poets. No one could be envious of the great hardships endured by Homer in the Pseudo-Herodotean *Vita*, who could never have known how famous he would become after his death. Readers could always suppose that they themselves could have become great poets, if given the opportunity, since, in the biographies, the process of writing is represented as a kind of reflex, a means of answering a criticism or responding to a kindness, and talent itself comes as a miraculous gift from the gods. Negative gossip about today's celebrities serves much the same purpose.

When Callimachus, in the *Aetia* prologue, complained of the Telchines, the "race of the evil eye," ancient scholars inferred that the Telchines were other poets. But Callimachus, like Pindar, was aware that envy is not solely the provenance of one's colleagues or rivals; audiences and patrons also seek to be pleased and flattered, and the gods themselves were thought to resent consistent success on the part of mere mortals. If Pindar and Callimachus had been able to predict their future, they would have realized that the most dangerous envy of all was that expressed by their biographers, because, in the absence of historical information, readers have turned to them as a means of interpreting the poet's works and have been influenced by them. The reputations of Euripides and Apollonius have been particularly affected by distortion in the biographical tradition.

Yet, despite the limitations of the biographies as historical documents, they nonetheless merit close attention, because they can offer us a sense of what scholars in later antiquity thought their audiences needed to know about the great figures of the past, and they remind us of how difficult it is to write meaningfully about the creative process. With all the scholarly tools we now possess and all the records and cultural information at our disposal, we still cannot manage to explain why it is that there are only a few people can speak about human experience in ways that instruct, and in language that the rest of us can understand and remember.

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Appendixes

1. THE HERODOTEAN LIFE OF HOMER

[1] Herodotus of Halicarnassus wrote the following history of Homer's background, upbringing, and life, and sought to make his account complete and absolutely reliable:

After Cyme (the old Aeolian one) was founded, there came together various Hellenic families in that city, including some from Magnesia. Among them was Melanopus the son of Ithagenes, himself the son of Crethon. Melanopus was not a rich man; in fact, he had only limited means. This Melanopus married in Cyme the daughter of Omyres. She bore him a female child, to whom he gave the name Cretheis. Both Melanopus and his wife then died, but Melanopus had made his daughter the ward of a close friend, Cleanax of Argos.

[2] But after some time had gone by, it turned out that the girl had had sexual relations with a man and had secretly become pregnant. At first she kept it a secret, but when Cleanax realized it, he was distressed by what had happened, and he called Cretheis aside and took her to task, because he was concerned about the disgrace, especially among his fellow citizens. So he made the following provision for her. The Cymeans happened at that time to be building a town in a corner of the valley of the Hermus River. Theseus had given the settlers the town's name, Smyrna, because he wanted to have a memorial in his wife's name, which was Smyrna. Theseus was one of the founders of Cyme, among the foremost Thessalians, descended from Eumelus the son of Admetus. He was a very wealthy man. It was there that Cleanax sent Cretheis, to Ismenias of Boeotia. He had been chosen by lot to be among the settlers and happened to be a particularly good friend of his.

[3] After some time had gone by, Cretheis went with the other women to a festival on the banks of the river called Meles, and since her time was already near, she bore Homer; he was not blind, but could see. She gave her son the

name Melesigenes, calling him after the river. For a while Cretheis stayed in Ismenias' house. But after some time she left and undertook to support herself and her son by working with her hands. She took on odd jobs with various people, and educated her son as best she could.

[4] There was in Smyrna at that time a man by the name of Phemius, who taught boys their letters and all their poetry. Since he lived alone, he paid Cretheis to work some wool for him; he took fleeces from his boys for pay. Since she did the work for him in good order and behaved herself properly, she pleased Phemius greatly. Finally, he proposed that she live with him. He persuaded her by various arguments, the sort of thing that he thought would appeal to her, particularly about her son, saying that he would adopt him, and that if the boy were brought up and educated by him he would be a noteworthy man. He had seen that the child was clever and particularly good-looking. So he persuaded her to do as he said.

[5] The boy had natural talent, and as a result of the attention and education, he soon surpassed all the others by far. After some time, when he had reached maturity, he proved to be in no way inferior to Phemius in his teaching. And so, when Phemius died he left everything to the boy. Not long afterwards, Cretheis died too. Melesigenes established himself in the teaching profession, and because he was now by himself, he was noticed by more people, and both the locals and new arrivals from abroad became admirers of his. For Smyrna was a market town, and quantities of grain were exported from there, and much grain was brought into the city from the surrounding countryside. Visitors, as soon as they finished their work, stopped to rest at Melesigenes' school and listened to his lectures.

[6] Among the visitors to his school was a merchant, Mentes, who came from the region near Leucas. He had sailed to Smyrna to buy produce; he was an educated man, at least by the standards of that time, and very knowledgeable. He persuaded Melesigenes to sail with him and to disband the school: he would receive a salary and all expenses. The idea was that he ought to see foreign lands and cities while he was still young. I think particularly that the notion of travel was very appealing to him, since possibly even then he had it in mind to become a poet. So Melesigenes disbanded his school and went off in the ship with Mentes, and wherever he went he saw all the countryside and learned by asking questions. It is probable that even then he was writing down a record of it all.

[7] After they had traveled back from Etruria and Spain they came to Ithaca. And it happened that Melesigenes, who already had suffered from eye

disease, became much worse. Because he needed treatment, Mentes left him in Ithaca when he was ready to sail to Leucas, at the house of a man who was an especially good friend of his, Mentor of Ithaca, the son of Alcimus, and he asked him to take great care of Melesigenes. Mentor nursed him assiduously—he was comfortably off and enjoyed by far the greatest reputation for justice and hospitality among the Ithacans. It was there that Melesigenes happened to make inquiries and learn about Odysseus. Now the Ithacans say that Melesigenes became blind when he was on their island, but I say that he regained his health then, and later became blind in Colophon. And the Colophonians agree with me about this.

[8] Mentes, on his way back from Leucas, sailed to Ithaca and collected Melesigenes. He sailed about with Mentes for a long time, but when he got to Colophon it turned out that he developed eye trouble again and could no longer resist the disease, and so it was in Colophon that he became blind. From Colophon then, now blind, Melesigenes came back to Smyrna, and so took up composing poetry.

[9] After some time, since he had no means of support in Smyrna, he decided to go to Cyme. He journeyed through the plain of Hermus and went to Neon Teichos, a colony of Cyme. The settlement had been established eight years after the founding of Cyme. There the story is told that he went and stood at a shoemaker's shop and recited these first verses:

> Respect a man who needs hospitality and a home, you who dwell in the steep city that is the fair daughter of Cyme, lowest foothill of high-wooded Saedene, you who drink the ambrosial water of a divine river, whirling Hermus, whom immortal Zeus begot. (Epigram I)

Saedene is a mountain that lies above the Hermus River and Neon Teichos. The shoemaker's name was Tychius. When he heard the verses, he thought he should take the man in, especially since he took pity on him and his request because of his blindness. So he told him to come into his workroom and invited him to share what he had. Melesigenes went in, and as he sat in the shoemaker's shop recited his poetry also to others who were there, the poems *Amphiaraus' Expedition to Thebes* and the *Hymns* to the gods which he had written; and when he expressed his thoughts about what the people sitting there said in general conversation, Melesigenes clearly made an impression on all who heard him.

[10] For a time, then, Melesigenes was able to make a living from his poetry in the area around Neon Teichos. Up to my own time the people of Neon Tei-

chos continued to show the spot where Homer sat and recited his verses, and they had great reverence for the place. A black poplar tree also grows there, which they say has been growing there since the time when Melesigenes came to their city.

[11] After some time, when he found himself idle and helpless and with barely enough to eat, Melesigenes decided to go to Cyme to see if he could do any better. As he was about to start off he spoke these verses:

> May my feet bring me straight to a city of righteous men; their hearts are generous and their intentions best. (Epigram 2)

He journeyed from Neon Teichos and came to Cyme, making his way through Larissa, since this was the easiest route for him. So, as the people of Cyme tell it, the story is that he wrote the following epigram for Midas, son of Gordias, the king of Phrygia, at the request of Midas' inlaws. The epigram is still inscribed on the stele of the tomb, in four verses:

> So long as water flows and the tall trees bloom, and the rising sun shines and the bright moon, I shall remain here on this tomb where many tears have been shed and tell passers-by that Midas is buried here. (Epigram 3)

[12] Melesigenes sat down and joined the old men's discussions in the town square of Cyme, and recited the verses he had composed. He brought pleasure to all who heard him, who then became admirers of his. When he realized that the Cymeans liked his poetry and found that they enjoyed listening to him, he made the following proposals to them: he said that if they wanted to feed him at public expense, he would make their city very famous. The people who listened to him were eager to do this, and they advised him to go to the town senate and ask the senators, and they said that they would come and help him. He took their advice and, when the council met, came into the senate house and asked the man who was appointed to that office to lead him into the meeting. He promised that he would, and at the appropriate moment he led him in. Melesigenes stood in front of the meeting and made the argument about public support that he had made in his conversations. After he had spoken, he went out and sat down.

[13] The councilors deliberated about what they ought to say in reply to him. The man who brought him in and other senators who had been in his audiences at the conversations were eager to support him. But the story is that one of the magistrates opposed his request, using among his arguments that

if they thought it right to feed *homeroi,* they would acquire a large and useless crowd of hangers-on. From that time on, the name Homer replaced Melesigenes because of his misfortune, since the Cymeans call blind men *homeroi.* And so the man who was previously called Melesigenes acquired the name Homer. And foreigners carried his name abroad, when they spoke about him.

[14] In the end, the argument was won by the magistrate, not to support Homer, and the rest of the senate somehow agreed. The officer came out and sat down next to Homer. He went over the arguments opposed to his request and what the senate had decided. Homer, when he had heard this, lamented his fate and recited the following verses:

> To such a fate Zeus gave me as prey, when as a child he let me play at the knee of my honored mother, the city which by the will of Zeus who holds the aegis, the people of Phricon once upon a time fortified, riders of wild horses, a people faster than raging fire, waging war, Aeolian Smyrna, neighbor to the sea, royal shore. The glorious water of the holy Meles runs through her, and from her the Muses arose, the glorious children of Zeus, and were willing to praise her noble land and her city of men. But these men scorned the holy voice, the renown of song in their folly. This someone shall recall when he is in trouble, the man who decided my fate, with his taunts. The destiny Zeus gave me when I was born I shall endure, bearing what is yet to come with patient heart. No longer do my limbs strive to remain in the holy streets of Cyme, but my strong heart urges me to go to other men's cities, weak as I am. (Epigram 4)

[15] After that, he moved from Cyme to Phocaea, after placing a curse on the Cymeans that no famous poet would be born in their country who would bring the Cymeans glory. When he arrived in Phocaea, he lived in the same way as before, reciting his poetry as he sat in on the men's discussions. In Phocaea at that time there lived a certain Thestorides who taught boys their letters; he was not an honorable man. When he learned of Homer's poetry he made proposals to him; he said that he was prepared to take Homer in and look after him and feed him, if he was willing to write down what he had composed and and when he wrote other poems would continue to bring them to him.

[16] Homer listened and decided that he would agree, since he was in need of the necessities of life and to be taken care of. While he stayed with Thestorides he composed the *Little Iliad,* the epic that begins: "I sing of Ilion and Dardania with its good horses, the city for which the Danaans suffered greatly, servants of Ares" (fr. 1 W). He also wrote the epic called *Phocais,* which the

Phocaeans say he composed while he was in their city. When Thestorides had written down the *Phocais* and everything else Homer had composed, he intended to move away from Phocaea, because he wanted to represent Homer's poetry as his own. Also, he no longer took care of Homer. Homer then composed the following verses:

> Thestorides, of the many things that make no sense to mortals, none is more incomprehensible than the human mind. (Epigram 5)

Thestorides then moved from Phocaea to Chios and set up a school and recited Homer's epics as his own. He won much praise and profit from them. Homer meanwhile went back to his old way of life in Phocaea and made a living from his poetry.

[17] Not long after, some Chian merchants arrived in Phocaea, and heard poetry by Homer that they had first heard many times in Chios from Thestorides. They told Homer that there was someone in Chios who recited the same verses, a teacher of letters, who had indeed won great praise for his recitations. Homer realized that this teacher might be Thestorides and wanted with all his heart to go to Chios. But when he went down to the harbor he could not catch any boats sailing to Chios, though some men were getting ready to sail to Erythraea for lumber. Homer was happy to make the voyage to Erythraea, and he went up to the sailors and asked them to take him on as a passenger, reciting attractive verses with which he intended to persuade them. They decided to take him, and told him to get into the boat. Homer praised them greatly and got in the boat. After he was seated, he recited these verses:

> Hear me, Poseidon with your great strength, earthshaker, guardian of [?] with its broad dancing places and holy Helicon, grant us a fair wind and that there be a voyage home without pain for these sailors who are the ship's escorts and captains. Grant that when I come to the foothills of Mimas with its high cliffs, I find men who respect me, pious men, and may I be avenged on the man who deceived me and angered Zeus god of guests and a guest's table. (Epigram 6)

[18] When they got to Erythraea after a calm voyage, Homer then spent the night on the boat. The next day he asked one of the sailors to bring him to the city. And they sent someone with him. Homer traveled until he came to Erythraea, a place which is steep and mountainous, and he spoke these verses:

> Queen earth, giver of all, giver of honeysweet happiness, I see how to some men you appear arable, but to others infertile and harsh, when you are angry at them. (Epigram 7)

When he got to the city of Erythraea, he asked about the voyage to Chios. A man greeted him who had seen him in Phocaea, and embraced him. Homer asked him to find a boat, so he could make the crossing to Chios. [19] Since no regular boat was going out from the harbor, the man took him to where the fishermen's boats were moored. And somehow he encountered some fishermen who were getting ready to sail to Chios. The man who led Homer there asked them to take Homer on board. But they took no account of him and set sail without him. So Homer spoke these verses:

> Sailors who travel by sea, ill-fated, like trembling diver-birds you lead an unenviable life; respect the honor of Zeus god of guests and his high power, for dreadful is the judgment of Zeus god of guests, when his law is broken. (Epigram 8)

When they set sail, it happened that an adverse wind sprang up. So they turned back and returned to the place from where they had set out, and they found Homer still sitting on the edge of the shore. When he discovered that they had come back he said:

> Strangers, an adverse wind sprang up and caught you. But now take me along with you and you will be able to make your voyage. (Epigram 9)

The fishermen now were sorry that they had not taken Homer on in the first place. They said that they would not leave him behind, if he wanted to sail with them, and they told him to get on board. And so, once they took him with them they set sail and landed the ship on a beach.

[20] The fishermen set about their work, Homer spent the night on the shore. But during the day he journeyed forth and, after wandering around, came to the place that is called Pitys ("Pine"). And, while he stopped there for the night, a fruit from a pine tree fell on him, the kind some call *strobiloi* ("spinning tops") and others call cones. And Homer spoke these verses:

> Another pine tree drops better fruit than yours, a tree in the hills of windy Ida with its many glens; there men will acquire the iron for war, at the time when the Cebrenians rule the country. (Epigram 10)

At that time the Cymeans were getting ready to found Cebrenia on Mt. Ida, and from there came a great supply of iron.

[21] Homer got up from under the pine tree and set out after the sound of goats being herded. When dogs barked at him, he cried out. When he heard Homer's voice, Glaucus (for that was the name of the man herding the goats)

ran quickly and called off the dogs and frightened them away from Homer. For a long time he was in a state of amazement about how a blind man could have come by himself to such a remote place, and wondered what he was looking for. He went up and asked him who he was and how he had come to these uninhabited places and regions without paths, and what he needed. Homer related all that he had suffered, and led him to pity him. Glaucus, as it seems, was not an ignorant man. He took Homer along and led him to his hut and kindled a fire and prepared dinner. And as he put the food beside him [22] he told Homer to eat. But since his dogs stood round and barked at them as they ate, as was their habit, Homer spoke these verses to Glaucus:

> Glaucus, guardian of pastures, I shall put some verses in your heart: give dinner first to your dogs by the gates of your courtyard. For that is best. Your dog first hears a stranger approaching and the wild animal nearing your fence. (Epigram 11)

When Glaucus heard this he was pleased by the advice and was impressed with Homer. After they ate dinner they entertained themselves with conversation. When Homer described in detail his wanderings and the cities to which he had come, Glaucus was amazed at what he heard. And then when it was time to go to bed, they broke off their conversation. [23] The next day Glaucus decided to make a trip to his master in order to tell him about Homer. He ordered a fellow slave to herd his goats and he left Homer inside after telling him: "I shall be back soon." He went to Bolissos—it is near Pitys. And when he was able to see his master he told him the whole truth about Homer, treated his arrival as miraculous, and he asked his master what he should do about him. His master did not take much account of what he said. He considered Glaucus a fool to take in and feed disabled people. But none the less he told Glaucus to bring the stranger to him.

[24] Glaucus went to Homer and described what had happened and told Homer to make the journey to his master, since he would prosper there. Homer was willing to make the journey. So Glaucus took him along and brought him to his master. When the Chian spoke with Homer, he found him to be clever and widely experienced. He urged Homer to remain and take charge of his children. The Chian had young children, and it was these whom he appointed Homer to educate. Homer did this. While he was with the Chian in Bolissos he composed the *Cercopes* and the *Battle of the Frogs and Mice* and the *Battle of the Starlings* and the *Heptapactia* and the *Epicichlides* and all the other children's

works attributed to Homer. As a result he became famous also in the city of Chios because of his poetry. When Thestorides heard that Homer was on the island, he went and sailed away from Chios.

[25] After some time Homer asked the Chian to send him to Chios, and went to the city. He set up a school there and taught boys his poetry. He seemed particularly clever to the Chians, and many were impressed by him. Since he made a good living, he took a wife, who bore two daughters to him. One of these died without marrying, but the other he married off to a man from Chios.

[26] He tried through his poetry to pay back the thanks which he owed; first to Mentor of Ithaca in the *Odyssey*, because he had nursed him assiduously when he was suffering from eye disease on Ithaca, by putting his name into the poetry and saying that he was a comrade of Odysseus. He composed the story that when Odysseus sailed off to Troy, he appointed Mentor to take charge of his household, because he was the best and most honored of all the Ithacans. Often elsewhere in his poetry he paid tribute to him by making Athena resemble Mentor whenever she engaged in conversation with someone. He repaid his own teacher Phemius for his upbringing and education in the *Odyssey*, particularly in these verses: "A herald put a beautiful lyre into the hands of Phemius, who far surpassed others in singing" (*Od.* 1153–54) and also "but he played the lyre and began to sing a beautiful song" (*Od.* 1155). He also remembered the shipowner with whom he had sailed round and had seen many cities and countries (the man whose name was Mentes) in these verses: "I say that I am Mentes, the son of warlike Anchialus, and I rule over the Taphians who love rowing" (*Od.* 1.180–81). He also paid thanks to Tychius the shoemaker, who took him in when he came to his shoemaker's shop in Neon Teichos, in these verses in the *Iliad:* "Ajax came near carrying a shield like a tower, bronze, seven hides thick, that Tychius had labored to make, the shoemaker, who made his house in Hyle" (*Il.* 6.219–21).

[27] Because of this poetry Homer became famous throughout Ionia, and word about him also spread to mainland Greece. While he was living in Chios and highly regarded for his poetry, since many people had come to him, his acquaintances advised him to go to Greece. He welcomed the suggestion and was very eager to make the journey. [28] Since he knew that he had written many fine tributes to Argos but none to Athens, he inserted into his poetry in the *Great Iliad* the verses glorifying Erechtheus in the *Catalogue of Ships:* "The people of great- hearted Erechtheus, whom Athena raised, daughter of Zeus,

and the grain giving earth bore" (*Il.* 2.547–48). He also praised their general, Menestheus, as best of all at deploying infantry and cavalry in these verses: "These then Menestheus son of Peteos led, no man was like him on earth in arranging in battle horses and soldiers with their shields" (*Il.* 2.552–54). He put Ajax son of Telamon and the men from Salamis with the Athenians in the *Catalogue of Ships* in these verses: "Ajax brought twelve ships from Salamis; he brought them and positioned them where the Athenian troops were stationed" (*Il.* 2.557–58). He also wrote in the *Odyssey* that when Athena came to speak to Odysseus she went back to the city of Athens, thus honoring that city far beyond others in these verses: "She came to Marathon and to the wide streets of Athens and went into the well-built house of Erechtheus" (*Od.* 7.80–81).

[29] When he had inserted these verses in his poetry and finished his preparations, intending to make a voyage to Greece he stopped at Samos. The people there happened at that moment to be celebrating the festival of Apaturia. One of the Samians who had seen him previously in Chios saw Homer coming and went to his kinsmen and told them about him in detail, and praised him highly. His kinsmen told him to bring Homer along. He met Homer and said, "Stranger, since the city is celebrating the Apaturia, my kinsmen wish you to celebrate with them." Homer said that he would come, and went with the man who invited him. [30] As he made his journey he encountered women sacrificing to the protectress of children in the crossroads. The priestess said to him in anger, at the sight of him, "Man, get away from our rites." Homer took what she said to heart and asked the man who was leading him who was the person who spoke and to which of the gods she was sacrificing. The man told him that it was a woman sacrificing to the protectress of children. When Homer heard his answer he uttered these verses:[1]

> Hear me, as I pray, Protectress of Children, grant that this woman reject love and sex with young men, but let her delight in old men with grey brows whose strength has been blighted, but whose hearts still feel desire (Epigram 12).

[31] When he came to the man's kinsmen and stood on the threshold of the house where they were having their banquet, some say that there was a fire burning in the house, but others say that they kindled one then, because Homer uttered the following verses:

> A man's crown is his children, a city its towers; horses are an ornament to a field, and ships to a sea. Possessions bring a house glory, and honorable kings seated in the marketplace are an ornament for their subjects to see; but a house is more honorable to look on when a fire is burning. (Epigram 13)

Homer went inside and sat down and ate with the kinsmen, and they honored him and held him in high regard.

And then, after Homer had spent the night there, [32] the next day as he was leaving some potters saw him as they were lighting their kiln to make delicate pottery, called out to him because they had heard that he was a poet, and asked him to sing for them. They said that they would give him pottery and whatever else they had. Homer sang this song for them, it is known as the *Kiln:*

> If you will pay me for my song, potters, come then, Athena, and hold your hand over their kiln. May their cups turn a good black and all their bowls [I pray] that they be well fired and win profit by their price, so that many are sold in the market, and many in the streets, that many bring gain, for me and for them to realize. But if you [potters] turn to shamelessness and tell me lies, then I shall invoke the destroyers of kilns—Smasher and Scatter and Sooty and Crasher—and Rawcrusher, who brings great problems to your craft. Hear me; [ruin] the fire-porch and the chambers, let the whole kiln be shaken, while the potters weep loudly. As a horse's jaw grinds, may the kiln grind all things inside it and turn them to sherds. Come, daughter of the Sun, Circe with your many spells, cast your cruel spells on them, harm the potters and their handiwork. Come, Chiron and bring many Centaurs, both those who escaped Heracles' hands and those who perished; may they hit these pots hard, may the kiln collapse, and may the potters weep as they look at their ruined handiwork. I will rejoice as I look on their unlucky craftsmanship. And if anyone peers in [the spy-hole], may his whole face be burned over, so that all men may know that they should be honest. (Epigram 14 = Hesiod, fr. 302 M–W)

[33] Homer spent the winter in Samos. He went out at the time of the new moon festival to the houses of rich people and made some money by singing these verses, the song called *Eiresione.* Some children from the countryside took him around and kept him company:

> We find ourselves at the home of a man with great power, a man with great resources, who thunders loudly, and is always prosperous. Doors, open by yourselves. For vast Wealth enters, and with Wealth comes flourishing Happiness and kindly Peace. Let all his grain-bins be full. Let the mound of dough flow from the kneading trough. Now may the fine barley with sesame . . . Your son's wife will come to you in a chariot. Swift-footed mules will bring her to your house. Let her weave her cloth as she walks on *electrum*. I come, I come each year like the swallow; I stand before your door barefoot, so bring something

> quickly. We ask you for Apollo's sake, lady, give us something. If you do, give us something good. If you do not, we will not linger. For we did not come here to live in your household. (Epigrams 15)

These verses were sung in Samos for a long time by children, when they would go begging at the festival of Apollo.

[34] When the spring came, Homer tried to sail to Athens from Samos. He set sail along with some Samians and was taken off course to Ios. They put ashore not at the city but on the beach. It happened that after Homer got on board he began to feel sick. When he got off the boat he slept at the water's edge because he was weak. Since they were beached there for several days because of lack of winds, people kept coming out from the town and spent time with him. When they heard him they were astonished by him. [35] While the sailors and some people from the town were sitting with Homer, some fisherboys sailed to the place and got out of their boat and came over to them. They said the following: "Come, strangers, listen to us, and see if you can understand what we say to you." One of the people there told them to speak. And they said: "We are the ones who caught what we left behind. We did not catch what we bring." Some say they spoke in verse: "All we caught we left behind; what we did not catch we bring." When the people there were not able to understand what they said, the boys explained that when they went fishing they could not catch anything. But when they sat on the land they looked for lice, and the lice they caught they left behind and the lice they could not catch they were bringing home with them. When Homer heard that, he uttered these verses:

> From the blood of fathers like yourselves you are descended; not from those with ancient inheritance or with boundless herds of sheep. (Epigram 16)

[36] It happened that Homer died from this sickness in Ios, not because he could not understand what the boys said, as some think, but from weakness. When he died he was buried in Ios, there on the beach, by the sailors and the citizens who had been present during the conversation with him on the beach. And at a much later time the people of Ios wrote this epitaph, since his poetry had become famous throughout the world and was admired by all. The verses are not Homer's: "Here the earth covers the sacred head of the poet who gave heroes glory, divine Homer."

[37] That Homer was an Aeolian and not from Ios or a Dorian I have made clear by what I have said, and he also provides the following evidence. It is

likely that such a great poet when he was composing would find and put into his poetry the best practices among men or choose those of his own native country. You will be able to judge yourself when you listen to the following verses. For either he discovered the best form of sacrifice or he composed poetry about sacrifice in his own country. He says the following: "First they drew back their heads and slaughtered and flayed and cut off the thigh pieces and covered them with fat, making a double fold and set the raw meat on them" (*Il.* 1.459–61). In these lines nothing is said about the loins that they use in sacrifice. For among all Greeks, the Aeolian race alone does not roast the loin. One can be certain also from the following verses that as an Aeolian he naturally observed their customs: "The old man roasted it on the split wood and poured out the bright wine, and in their hands the young men held out to him the five-pronged forks (*pempōbola*)" (*Il.* 1.462–63). For only the Aeolians roast entrails on the five-pronged forks; the other Greeks use three. The Aeolians also call the number five [*pente*] *pempe.*

[38] I have now revealed what I know about Homer's background and death and life. As for Homer's date, one might calculate it accurately and correctly from the following: From the time of the expedition to Troy which Agamemnon and Menelaus organized, it was one hundred and thirty years before Lesbos was colonized by towns; previously Lesbos had no towns. Twenty years after Lesbos was settled, Aeolian Cyme (which is also called Phriconis) was settled. Eighteen years after Cyme, Smyrna was colonized by Cymaeans, and at that time Homer was born. From the time Homer was born, there were six hundred and twenty-two years until Xerxes' crossing, in his campaign against the Greeks, when he bridged the Hellespont and crossed from Asia into Europe. From this point it is easy to measure the time if one wishes by referring to the Archons in Athens. Homer was born one hundred and sixty-eight years after the Trojan War.[2]

2. THE LIFE OF PINDAR

[1] The poet Pindar was a Theban from Cynoscephalae, which is a village in the territory of Thebes. He was the son of Daïphantus, or according to other authorities, of Pagondas. Still others trace his genealogy to Scopelinus. Some say that Scopelinus was his uncle and that, since he played the *aulos,* he taught his skill to Pindar. His mother was Cleodice. Other authorities spell it Cledice.

[2] When Pindar was a boy, according to Chamaeleon (fr. 32a Wehrli) and

Ister (*FGrHist* 334 F 77), he went hunting near Mt. Helicon and fell asleep from exhaustion. As he slept, a bee landed on his mouth and built a honeycomb there. Others say that he had a dream in which his mouth was full of honey and wax, and that he then decided to write poetry.

[3] Some authorities say that at Athens his teacher was Agathocles, others say Apollodorus. Apollodorus also, when he was in charge of the dithyrambic choruses and had to be out of town, entrusted their direction to Pindar, even though he was still a boy. Pindar directed them so well that he became famous.

[4] When he said that Athens was the bulwark of Hellas (fr. 76) he was fined one thousand drachmas by the Thebans, and the Athenians paid the fine on his behalf.

[5] He was not only a beautiful poet, but he was a man dear to the gods. For example, the god Pan was seen between Cithaeron and Helicon singing a paean of Pindar. Accordingly, Pindar wrote a song to the god in which he offers his gratitude for the honor, the poem that begins "O Pan, Pan protector of Arcadia and guard of sacred shrines" (fr. 95). And Demeter also appeared in a dream and blamed him, because for her alone of all the gods he had written no hymn. So he wrote her the poem that begins "Queen, law-bringer, with golden headband" (fr. 37). And he also built an altar to both gods in front of his house.

[6] When Pausanias the king of the Lacedaemonians was razing Thebes, someone wrote on Pindar's house: "Do not set fire to the home of the poet Pindar." As a result, his was the only house that remained unburned, and the house is now the magistrate's hall in Thebes.

[7] At Delphi also when the priest is getting ready to close the temple he announces each day: "Let Pindar the poet come to join the god at dinner." For the poet was born during the Pythian festival, as he himself says: "The quadrennial festival with its procession of oxen, in which I first was put to bed in swaddling clothes" (fr. 193).

[8] There is a story that pilgrims went to the temple of Ammon to ask for Pindar what was best for men, and the poet died in that year.

[9] He lived at the time of Simonides, though he was younger, Simonides older. In fact both of them celebrated the same events. Simonides wrote about the naval battle at Salamis (*PMG* 536) and Pindar celebrated the kingdom of Cadmus (fr. 272). Both of them were together at the court of Hieron the tyrant of Syracuse.

[10] He married Megacleia the daughter of Lysitheus and Calline and had a

son Daïphantus, for whom he wrote a song for the Daphnephoria. He had two daughters, Protomache and Eumetis.

[11] He wrote seventeen books: hymns, paeans, dithyrambs (2), prosodia (2), partheneia (2) and allegedly a third book which has the title of separate partheneia, hyporchemes (2), encomia, lamentations, victory odes (4).

[12] There is an epigram which concludes as follows: "How Protomache and Eumetis weep for you in shrill voices, your wise daughters, when they came from Argos bringing home in an urn your remains which had been gathered from a foreign funeral pyre" (*Anth. Pal.* 7.35).

3. THE LIFE OF AESCHYLUS

[1] Aeschylus the tragic poet's nationality was Athenian, his deme Eleusis. He was the son of Euphorion, the brother of Cynegirus. His family was aristocratic. [2] He began writing tragedies when he was a young man and he raised standards far above his predecessors, in writing and in staging, in the splendour of his choral productions, in his actors' costumes and in the serious content of his choral songs. As Aristophanes says, "You who first built towers of serious (*semna*) speeches and made tragic humbug beautiful" (*Ran.* 1004–5). [3] He was a contemporary of Pindar's, having been born in the sixty-fourth Olympiad. [4] They say that he was heroic and that he fought in the battle of Marathon along with his brother Cynegirus, and in the naval battle at Salamis along with his younger brother Ameinias, and also in the infantry battle at Plataea.

[5] In the composition of his poetry he strove for a grand style, by using compound words and epithets, and also metaphors and every other device that could lend weight to his diction. The plots of his plays do not abound in reversals and complexities like those of later poets, for he aimed solely at investing his characters with dignity. He thought that heroic grandeur struck the proper archaic note, but that cunning ingenuity and sententiousness were foreign to tragedy. It was for this reason that Aristophanes made fun of him in his comedies, because of his stress on the excessive dignity of his characters. [6] For example, in the *Niobe,* Niobe sits silent by her children's tomb for three scenes with her head covered, and does not utter a word; and in the *Ransom of Hector,* Achilles with his head covered similarly does not utter anything except a few words at the beginning, in conversation with Hermes. [7] For this reason one could find many outstanding illustrations of his striking dramatic contrivances but few aphorisms or pathetic scenes or other effects calculated

to produce tears. He used visual effects and plots more to frighten and amaze than to trick his audience.

[8] He went off to stay with Hieron, according to some authorities, because he was criticized by the Athenians and defeated by Sophocles when the latter was a young man, but according to others because he was defeated by Simonides in an elegy for those who died at Marathon. Elegy in particular needs to have the conciseness necessary to arouse emotion, and Aeschylus' poem (as we said) was not suitable. [9] Some say that during the performance of the *Eumenides,* when he brought the chorus on one by one, he so frightened the audience that children fainted and unborn infants were aborted. Then he went to Sicily at the time that Hieron was founding the city Aetna and put on the *Women of Aetna,* as a portent for a good life for the people living in the city.

[10] He was also greatly honored both by Hieron and by the people of Gela, and after living there for two years he died, an old man, in the following way: an eagle had caught a tortoise, and because it did not have the strength to get control of its prey threw it down on some rocks in order to break its shell. But the tortoise fell instead on the poet and killed him. For he had received an oracle: "Something thrown from the sky will kill you." [11] After his death the people of Gela buried him richly in the city's cemetery and honored him extravagantly by writing the following epigram: "This tomb in grain-bearing Gela covers an Athenian, Aeschylus son of Euphorion, who died here. The famous grove of Marathon could tell of his courage and the long-haired Mede knew it well" (*FGE* 476–79). All who made their living in the tragic theatre went to his tomb to offer sacrifices and recited their plays there.

[12] The Athenians liked Aeschylus so much that they voted after his death to award a golden crown to whoever was willing to put on one of his dramas. [13] He lived sixty-three years, during which time he wrote seventy dramas and in addition about five satyr plays. He won more than a few victories after his death.

[14] Aeschylus was first to enhance tragedy with highly heroic effects and to decorate the stage and to astound his audience's eyes with splendor, through pictures and devices, with altars and tombs, trumpets, images and Furies. He equipped the actors with gloves and dignified them with long robes and elevated their stance with higher buskins. [15] He used Cleander as first actor, then with him as second actor Mynniscus of Chalcis. It was he who invented the third actor, though Dicaearchus of Messene says it was Sophocles (fr. 100 Mirhady = fr. 76 Wehrli = *TrGF* 4, T 78).

[16] If one were to compare the simplicity of his dramatic art to dramatists

after him, one might think it insignificant and unsophisticated. But if one compared him to his predecessors, one would admire the poet for his intelligence and inventiveness. Anyone who thinks that the most perfect writer of tragedy is Sophocles is correct, but he should remember that it was much harder to bring tragedy to such a height after Thespis, Phrynichus, and Choerilus than it was, by speaking after Aeschylus, to come to Sophocles' perfection.

[17] There is an inscription on his tomb: "I died, struck on the forehead by a missile from an eagle's claws."

[18] They say that he put on the *Persians* in Sicily at Hieron's request and was highly praised for it.

4. SOPHOCLES

[1] Sophocles was an Athenian by birth. He was the son of Sophillus, who was not a carpenter in spite of what Aristoxenus tells us (fr. 115 Wehrli), nor a bronze-smith, nor a swordmaker by trade in spite of what Ister tells us (*FGrHist* 334 F 33). As it happened, his father owned *slaves* who were bronze-smiths and carpenters. For it is not likely that a man descended from a tradesman would be considered worthy of a generalship along with Pericles and Thucydides, who were the most important men in the city. Indeed, if his father had been a tradesman, he would not have got off without abuse from the comic poets, who did not even keep their hands off Pericles. Nor ought one to believe Ister (*FGrHist* 334 F 34) when he says Sophocles was not an Athenian but rather a Phliasian. Even if Sophocles' family originally came from Phlious, still one cannot find this information in any author other than Ister. In fact Sophocles was an Athenian by birth. His deme was Colonus. He was distinguished both because of his life and his poetry. He was well educated and raised in comfortable circumstances, and he was involved in government and in embassies abroad.

[2] They say that he was born in the second year of the seventy-first Olympiad, when Philip was archon in Athens [495/4 B.C.]. He was seven years younger than Aeschylus, and twenty-four years older than Euripides.

[3] He trained with other boys both in wrestling and in music, and won crowns for both, as Ister says (*FGrHist* 334 F 35). He studied music with Lamprus, and after the naval battle at Salamis, when the Athenians were standing round the victory monument, Sophocles with his lyre, naked and anointed with oil, led the chorus which sang the paean at the victory sacrifice.

[4] He learned about tragedy from Aeschylus. He also was responsible for

innovations in the dramatic competitions. He was the first to break the tradition of the poet's acting, because his own voice was weak. For in the old days the poet himself served as one of the actors. He changed the number of chorus members from twelve to fifteen and invented the third actor.

[5] They say that he also took up the lyre and that only in the *Thamyris* did he ever sing; on account of this there is a picture of him playing a lyre in the Painted Stoa.

[6] Satyrus says (F 3 Schorn) that Sophocles invented the crooked staff himself. Ister also says (*FGrHist* 334 F 36) that he discovered the white half-boots that actors and chorus members wear, and that he wrote his dramas to suit their characters, and that he organized a *thiasos* to the Muses of cultivated people.

[7] In a word, his character was so charming that he was loved everywhere and by everyone.

[8] He won twenty victories, according to Carystius (*FHG* 4,359 F 18). He often won second prize, but never third.

[9] The Athenians elected him general when he was sixty-five years old, seven years before the Peloponnesian war began, in the war against the Anaioi.

[10] He was so loyal to Athens that when many kings sent for him he did not want to leave his country.

[11] He held the priesthood of Halon, who was a hero under Chiron's tutelage along with Asclepius. After Sophocles' death, Halon's shrine was maintained by his son Iophon. [12] Sophocles was more pious than anyone else, according to what Hieronymus says (fr. 31 Wehrli) . . . about his golden crown. When this crown was stolen from the Acropolis, Heracles came to Sophocles in a dream and told him to go into the house on the right and it would be hidden there. Sophocles brought this information to the citizens and received a reward of a talent, as had been announced in advance. He used the talent to establish a shrine of Heracles Informer.

[13] The story is told by many authorities that at some point he brought a lawsuit against his son Iophon. Iophon was his son by Nicostrate, but he had a son Ariston by Theoris of Sicyon, and he was especially fond of this son's child, whose name was Sophocles. Once in a drama . . . portrayed Iophon as being envious of him and as making accusations to the members of his phratry that his father had become senile in his old age. They censured Iophon. Satyrus (F 4 Schorn) says the poet said: "If I am Sophocles I'm not senile, if I am senile, I'm not Sophocles,"and then he recited the *Oedipus.*

[14] Ister (*FGrHist* 334 F 37) and Neanthes (*FGrHist* 84 F 18) say he died in the following way: When Callippides the actor came from the workshop in Opus and around the time of the festival of the Choes sent Sophocles a bunch of grapes, and when Sophocles put a grape that was still unripe into his mouth, he choked because of his advanced age and died. Satyrus says (F 5 Schorn) that when Sophocles was reciting the *Antigone* and came to a passage toward the end of the play that did not have a break or mark for a pause, he strained his voice too much and gave up his life along with his voice. Some say that after he recited the drama, and he was proclaimed winner, he was overcome by joy and died.

[15] His body was placed on top of his ancestral tomb near the road to Deceleia, eleven stades from the city wall. Some say that they put up a statue of a siren in his memory; others, a bronze Celedon. Since the Spartans were building a wall at this spot against the Athenians, Dionysus appeared to Lysander in a dream and ordered that the man should be buried. When Lysander ignored the dream, Dionysus appeared to him a second time with the same message. Lysander then asked some fugitives who it was who had died, and learned that it was Sophocles. So he sent a herald and allowed the Athenians to bury the body.

[16] Lobon says that this epitaph was written on his tomb: "In this tomb I hide Sophocles who won first prize with his tragic art, a most holy figure."

[17] Ister says (*FGrHist* 334 F 38) the Athenians voted to sacrifice to him each year because of his excellence.

[18] He wrote one hundred and thirty dramas, as Aristophanes [of Byzantium] says (fr. 385 Slater), of which seventeen are spurious. [19] He competed against Aeschylus, Euripides, Choerilus, Aristias, and many others, including his son Iophon. [20] In general he used Homeric vocabulary. He took his plots from the direction set by the epic poet and drew on the *Odyssey* for many of his dramas. He gives the etymology of Odysseus' name (*Od.* 19.407–9) the way Homer did: "I am Odysseus, named correctly for my troubles. For many hostile people have been angry (*odysanto*) at me" (*TrGF* 4, fr. 965).

[20] He delineated character, elaborated and used contrivances skillfully, reproducing Homer's charm. For this reason a certain Ionian says that only Sophocles is a pupil of Homer. Certainly many poets have imitated one of their predecessors or contemporaries, but Sophocles alone culled the best from each. For this reason he was also called "the bee." He brought everything together: timing, sweetness, courage, variety.

[21] He knew how to match timing and events, so that he could delineate

a whole character from a fraction of a line or from a single speech. This is the greatest mark of poetic skill, to delineate character or effect.

[22] Aristophanes says (fr. 679 KA, PCG III.2, p. 349) that "a honeycomb sat on him," and elsewhere (fr. 598 KA , *PCG* III.2, p. 319) = *TrGF* 4, T 108) that "Sophocles' mouth is smeared with honey."

[23] Aristoxenus says (fr. 79 Wehrli) that he was the first of the Athenian poets to put Phrygian music into his own songs and to mix in the dithyrambic style.

5. THE LIFE OF EURIPIDES

[IA] [1] Euripides the poet was the son of Mnesarchides, a storekeeper, and of Cleito, a vegetable-seller.[1] He was an Athenian. He was born in Salamis while Calliades was archon, in the seventy-fifth Olympiad, the year when the Greeks fought the naval battle against the Persians [480 B.C.].

[2] At first he practiced for the *pankration* or for boxing, because his father had understood an oracle to mean that he would win at contests in which crowns were awarded. And they say that he won a victory in games at Athens. Once Euripides understood the oracle's meaning, he turned to writing tragedy; he introduced many innovations—prologues, philosophical discourses, displays of rhetoric, and recognition scenes—because he attended lectures by Anaxagoras, Prodicus, and Protagoras and was a friend of Socrates.

[3] Socrates the philosopher and Mnesilochus appear to have collaborated with him in some of his writings;[2] as Teleclides says, "that fellow Mnesilochus is cooking up a new play for Euripides, and Socrates is supplying him with firewood" (fr. 41 KA, *PCG* VII, 683). Some authorities say that Iophon or Timocrates of Argos wrote his lyrics.

[4] They say that he was also a painter and that pictures of his are shown at Megara, that he was a torchbearer in the rites of Apollo Zosterius.

[5] [They say] that he was born on the same day as Hellanicus (*FGrHist* 4 T 6), which was the day that the Greeks won the naval battle at Salamis, and that he began to compete in dramatic contests at the age of twenty-six.

[6] He emigrated to Magnesia and was awarded the privileges of a *proxenos* there and freedom from taxation. From there he went to Macedonia and stayed at the court of Archelaus.[3] As a favor to him he wrote a drama named for him, and he made out very well there, because he was also appointed to an administrative post.

[7] It is said that he wore a long beard and had moles on his face.

[8] [It is said] that his first wife was Melito, his second Choirile. He left three sons: the oldest, Mnesarchides, a merchant; the second, Mnesilochus, an actor; the youngest, Euripides, who produced some of his father's dramas.

[9] He began to produce dramas when Callias was archon in the first year of the eighty-first Olympiad [455 B.C.]. First he put on the *Peliades,* with which he won third prize. He wrote a total of ninety-two dramas, of which seventy-eight are extant. Of these, three are spurious: *Tennes, Rhadamanthys,* and *Perithous.*

[10] He died, according to Philochorus, when he was over seventy years old (*FGrHist* 328 F 220), according to Eratosthenes, seventy-five (*FGrHist* 241 F 12), and he was buried in Macedonia. He has a cenotaph in Athens, with an inscription on it either by Thucydides the historian or by the lyric poet Timotheus: "All Hellas is Euripides' memorial, but the land of Macedonia holds his bones, for it took in the end of his life. His fatherland was the Greece of Greece, Athens. Having brought great pleasure with his poetry he also won many men's praise" (*FGE* 1052–55 = *Anth. Pal.* 7.45).[4] They say that both monuments were struck by lightning.

[11] They say that Sophocles, when he heard that Euripides had died, went before the public in a dark cloak and brought his chorus and actors on stage without crowns on their heads in the ceremonial parade preceding the dramatic competition, and that the citizens wept (*TrGF* 4, T 54).

[IB] [1] Another version. Euripides was the son of Mnesarchides, an Athenian. The writers of Old Comedy made fun of him in their plays by calling him the son of a woman who sold vegetables. [2] Some say that at first he was a painter but that after he had studied with Archelaus the natural philosopher and with Anaxagoras he started to write tragedies. For this reason, presumably, he was also somewhat arrogant and kept away from ordinary people and had no interest in appealing to his audiences. This practice hurt him as much as it helped Sophocles.

[3] The comic poets, too, attacked him and tore him to pieces in their envy. He disregarded all this and went away to Macedonia to the court of King Archelaus,[5] and when he was returning there late one evening he was killed by the king's dogs. [4] He began to produce dramas around the eighty-first Olympiad, when Callias was archon [455 B.C.]. Because he used the middle style, he excelled in expression and used reasoning perfectly on either side. In his lyric poetry he was inimitable, and he elbowed virtually all the other lyric poets aside.[6] But in dialogue he was wordy and vulgar and irritating in his prologues, most rhetorical in his elaboration and clever in his phrasing and capable of demolishing previous arguments.

[5] He wrote a total of ninety-two dramas, of which sixty-seven are extant, and in addition three that are falsely attributed to him; also eight satyr plays, among these one that is falsely attributed to him. He won five victories.

[II] Euripides died in the following manner:[7] There was a town in Macedonia called the village of the Thracians because Thracians had once settled there. At some point, a female Molossian hound belonging to Archelaus had strayed into the village. This dog the Thracians, as is their custom, sacrificed and ate. Accordingly Archelaus fined them one talent. Since they did not have the money, they asked Euripides to get them released from their debt to the king. Sometime later, Euripides was resting by himself in a grove near the city, when Archelaus came out to hunt; his dogs were released by their keepers and fell on Euripides. The poet was torn to shreds and eaten. These dogs were the descendants of the dog that was killed by the Thracians. This is the origin of the Macedonian proverb, "a dog's justice."

[III] [1] They say that in Salamis he furnished a cave that had an opening on the sea and that he spent his days there in order to avoid the public. Because of this he drew most of his comparisons from the sea.[8] His looks were melancholy, thoughtful, and severe; he hated laughter and he hated women. On that account Aristophanes found fault with him: "To me [Euripides] seems sour to speak to" (Alexander of Aetolia, fr. 7 Powell).[9]

[2] They say that after he married Mnesilochus' daughter Choirile and realized that she was unfaithful, he first wrote the play *Hippolytus,* in which he exposes women's immorality, and then he divorced her. When her next husband said: "She is chaste in my household," Euripides replied: "You're a fool if you think the same woman will be chaste in one man's house but not in another's" (Eur., *El.* 923–24). He took a second wife, but when he found she tended to be unchaste, he was more readily encouraged to slander women. The women planned to kill him and to come to his cave, where he spent his time writing.

[3] He was accused (enviously) of having Cephisophon as coauthor of his tragedies. [4] Hermippus (fr. 94 Wehrli = *FGrHist* 1026 F 84) also says that after Euripides' death Dionysius, the tyrant of Sicily, sent a talent to his heirs and got his harp, his tablet, and his stylus; and when he saw them, he ordered the people who brought them to dedicate them as offerings in the temple of the Muses, and he had his own and Euripides' names inscribed on them. For this reason they say that [Euripides] was considered a great friend of foreigners, since foreigners particularly liked him, while he was hated by the Athenians.

[5] When a boorish youth said enviously that Euripides had bad breath, Eu-

ripides said: "Do not criticize me; my mouth is sweeter than honey and the Sirens."[10]

[IV] [1] Euripides made fun of women in his poetry for the following reason. He had a home-bred slave named Cephisophon. He discovered his own wife misbehaving with this boy.[11] At first he tried to dissuade her, and when he could not convince her, he left his wife to Cephisophon. Aristophanes also refers to this: "O best and darkest Cephisophon, you lived with Euripides in a lot of ways, and you wrote his poetry (so they say) along with him" (fr. 59 KA, *PCG* III.2, 318). [2] They also say that women lay in ambush for him at the Thesmophoria because of his criticisms of them in his poetry.[12] They wanted to destroy him, but they spared him, first because of the Muses and then because he promised never again to say anything bad about them. For example, this is what he said about women in the *Melanippe:* "In vain men shoot their criticism at women. In vain men's blame, like an empty bowshot, twangs at women and speaks ill of them. Women are better than men! I shall prove it" (*TrGrF* 5.1, F 494.1–3), and so on. [3] Philemon was so devoted to Euripides that he dared to say the following of him: "If it's true the dead have feeling, as some men say, then I would hang myself so I could see Euripides" (fr. 115 KA, *PCG* VII, 290).

6. ARISTOPHANES

[1] Aristophanes the comic poet's father was Philippus. His nationality was Athenian, from the deme of Cydathenaeum, and from the tribe of Pandionis. It was he who first is thought to have transformed comedy—which was still wandering around in the old style—into something more useful and more respectable. Comedy had previously been spiteful and more shameful, because the poets Cratinus and Eupolis uttered more slander than was appropriate. Aristophanes was [5] first also to demonstrate the manner of New Comedy in his *Cocalus,* a play Menander and Philemon took as the starting point for their dramatic compositions.

Since he was very cautious at the start, all the more because he was gifted, he produced his first plays under the names of Callistratus and Philonides. Because of this, Aristonymus (fr. 3 KA, *PCG* I, 512) and Ameipsias (fr. 27 KA, *PCG* II, 209) made fun of him, saying that (as in the proverb) he was born on the fourth day, to toil for other men. [10] Later on he entered the contests for himself.

He was in particular an enemy of Cleon the demagogue and wrote the *Knights* as an attack on him. In that comedy he exposes Cleon's thefts and his tyrannical nature, and since none of the costumers had the courage to make a mask of Cleon's face, because they were too frightened, since Cleon acted like a tyrant, Aristophanes acted the part of Cleon, smearing his face with red dye, [15] and was responsible for a penalty of five talents which was levied against Cleon because of the *Knights*, as he says in the *Acharnians* (5–6): "But one thing really made me happy, when I saw those five talents that Cleon vomited up."

Aristophanes had become Cleon's enemy because Cleon had entered a lawsuit against him because of his being foreign, [20] and because in his play the *Babylonians* Aristophanes criticized the elected magistrates while foreigners were present. Some say that he was a foreigner himself, inasmuch as some say he was a Rhodian from Lindos, others that he was an Aeginetan, an assumption based on his having spent a considerable amount of time there or on his owning property there. According to other authorities it was that his father Philippus was an Aeginetan. Aristophanes absolved himself from these charges by wittily quoting Homer's lines: [25] "My mother says I'm his son, but I do not know myself. For no one knows his own father (*Od.* 1.215–16)."

When he was informed against a second and third time he also got off, and now that he had been clearly established as a citizen, he won out over Cleon. As he says, "[I] know how I was treated by Cleon," etc. (*Ach.* 377). He was held in high regard because he got rid of the informers, [30] whom he called Fevers in the *Wasps,* where he says, "they strangle their fathers at night and choke their grandfathers" (1038–39).

People praised and liked him particularly because of his determination to show in his dramas that the government of Athens was free and not enslaved by any tyrant, and that it was a democracy, and that since they were free, the people ruled themselves. [35] For this reason he won praise and a crown of sacred olive (which was considered equal in worth to a golden crown) when he spoke in the *Frogs* about the men who had been deprived of their rights: "It is just that the sacred chorus give the city much good advice" (686–87).

[40] The metrical pattern called Aristophanean was named after him, since he was well known. The poet's fame was so great that it was known in Persia, and the king of the Persians asked whose side the comic poet was on. There is also the story that when Dionysius the tyrant wanted to learn about Athens' government, Plato sent Aristophanes' poetry and advised him to learn about their government by studying Aristophanes' dramas. [45] Aristophanes was responsible for his imitation by the writers of New Comedy, I mean Philemon

and Menander. When the decree about *chorēgoi* was passed, that no one could be ridiculed by name, and when the *chorēgoi* were no longer rich enough to provide subsidies to train choruses, and because of these measures the substance of comedy had been completely removed (the purpose of comedy being to ridicule people), [50] Aristophanes wrote the *Cocalus,* in which he introduces seduction and recognition and other such events, which Menander especially likes. When once again the subsidies for training choruses were taken away, Aristophanes, when he wrote the *Ploutos,* in order to give the actors in the scenes time to rest and to change, wrote "for the chorus" in the directions, in the places where we see the poets of New Comedy writing in "for the chorus" in emulation of Aristophanes.

In that drama he introduced his son Araros and so departed from life, [55] leaving three sons, Philippus (named after his grandfather), Nicostratus, and Araros. He mentions his children in these lines: "I am ashamed before my wife and my helpless children" (fr. 604 KA, *PCG* III.2, 322), perhaps meaning them. He wrote forty-four plays, of which it is alleged that four are spurious. These are *Poetry, The Shipwrecked Man, Islands, Niobus*—which some authorities say are by Archippus.

7. APOLLONIUS

Vita A

Apollonius, the poet of the *Argonautica*, was in origin an Alexandrian, of the Ptolemaic tribe, the son of Silleus, or according to others Illeus. He was born during the reign of the Ptolemy known as Euergetes. At first he kept company with Callimachus, his own teacher, and then turned to writing poetry.

It is said that when he was a young man he gave a public reading of the *Argonautica* and was looked down upon. Because he was unable to bear the obloquy from the citizens and the slander from the other poets, he left his homeland and went into exile in Rhodes. There he polished and improved his poems and then held a public reading and was very well received. For that reason he put his name down as "the Rhodian" in his poetry. He was a famous teacher in Rhodes and was awarded citizenship and honor by the city of Rhodes.

Vita B

Apollonius the poet was in origin an Alexandrian. His father was Silleus or Illeus, his mother Rhode. He was a pupil of Callimachus, who was a grammarian in Alexandria. He composed this poem [the *Argonautica*] and gave a

public reading. Because he was particularly unlucky and embarrassed, he went to Rhodes and was a resident there and taught the study of rhetoric. For that reason they wished to call him "Rhodian." He spent time there and polished his poem, and then read it and was very well received, and as a result awarded citizenship and honor. Some say that he returned to Alexandria and again gave a public reading there and was praised to the skies. So he was deemed worthy of the Library and the Museum and buried next to Callimachus himself.

Notes

Introduction

1. Homeyer 1962, 75–85.

2. Jefferson 2007, 17; for a recent but flawed attempt to set Greek poets into a biographical context, see Schmidt 2004.

3. Graziosi 2002, 18.

4. Compton 2006 argues that the lives of poets are patterned on the ritual and mythology of the scapegoat or *pharmakos*, who is driven out in order to purify the community.

5. Fairweather 1983, 331–37. For a survey of "formulaic themes" in the Lives, see Kivilo 2010, 227–31.

6. The dates of some poets are conjectural (e.g., Hesiod, Homer) and many others are approximate. Approximate dates are sometimes based on ancient sources such as the *Suda*, whose sources in turn drew on victory lists (*didaskaliai*) or ancient chronologies such as the Parian Marble (Jacoby 1904; *FGrHist* 239), and/or on references to historical events in particular poems. On dating methods used by chronographers in the fourth century B.C. and later, see esp. Clarke 2008, 57–89.

CHAPTER 1: *Hesiod*

1. Graziozi 2002, 106–7. Hesiod was thirty years older than Homer according to the Parian Marble, *FGrHist* 239 A 28, 27. The author of the *Contest between Homer and Hesiod* (*Certamen* [*Cert.*] in Latin) provides a genealogy which makes Hesiod three generations older (!) but says that some writers also regarded Homer as older or as a contemporary (Cert. §4) For a survey of all ancient sources, see Jacoby 1904, 152–58, with discussion in Graziosi 2002, 90–124; Heath 2009, 265; Kivilo 2010, 45–52.

2. See Plut., *Conv. sept. sap.* 153f; Plutarch's phrasing echoes Hesiod's and may itself have been inferred from Hesiod's text; see Most 2006, xxv n.8; Kivilo 2010, 45–46. But Plutarch could also have drawn on an independent source; West 1978, 320–21. Homer also knows about men named Amphidamas, one from Cythera (*Il.* 10.268) and the other from Opuntian Locris (*Il.* 23.87); it is a name that fits well at the end of a hexameter line, which is also where Hesiod places it at *Op.* 654.

3. See esp. Griffith 1983, 47–63.

4. West 1978, 317; cf. Archilochus' unkind remarks about Thasos, fr. 22W Richardson

1979, 171, suggests that the lines reflect, "with an exile's typical nostalgia," Hesiod's *father's* opinion of his new home. On the theme of "blame poets" and exile, cf. Compton 2006, 80.

5. *Athesphatos* can mean "unlimited," as when describing the sea or the rain (West 1978, 322), but here it seems rather to be a synonym for *thespesios* or *thespis* (as in *Theog.* 31–32; *Od.* 1.328, 8.498 and *thespis aoidos*, *Od.* 17.385; Chantraine 1983, 433). A song inspired by the gods can provide more information than any human could know.

6. On the role of the chiefs in Chalkis and Ascra, see Edwards 2004, 70.

7. According to Timaeus (*FGrHist* 566 F 4 = Diog. Laert. i.114), Epimenides himself was never seen to eat because he had received special food from the Muses; Jacoby compares Pythagoras' diet (*FGrHist* 457 T 1, IIIb, 316–17). On the significance of *gasteres,* see Svenbro 1976, 50–59; Kambylis 1965, 62; and now esp. Katz and Volk 2000, 127, who argue that *gasteres* can mean "entity capable of issuing intelligent, even inspired speech."

8. On Hesiod's encounter with the Muses, see West 1966, 163–64; Nagy 1999, 263–64; Katz and Volk 2000, 122–31.

9. The third-century B.C. poet Callimachus says that he dreamt that he was taken from his home Cyrene to Mt. Helicon for instruction (fr. 2 Pf); (*Theog.* 69–71), the Roman Poet Ennius (239–169 B.C.) alludes to Hesiod's experience (*Ann.* fr.1, 3 Skutsch); on the Muses' dancing, see Skutsch 1985, 146. The third-century A.D. poet Quintus of Smyrna claims that the Muses put song in his heart while he was pasturing his sheep (13.306–13); on Quintus and the Muses, see James 2004, xvii–xviii.

10. Ephorus *FGrHist* 70 F 1; other fifth-century writers also deduced that Dios was the name of Hesiod's father; see West 1978, 232. The scholia on *Op.* 271 and 269 suggested that Hesiod's son had the appropriate names Mnaseas and Archiepes; West 1978, 225. Hermesianax, perhaps not seriously, says ēoiē was Hesiod's beloved and the model for others "like her" (*ēoiē*; fr. 7.24–26 Powell); cf. Bell 1978, 60.

11. See esp. Loeffler 1963, 48–49. Cf. also the contest between Lesches (*Little Iliad*) and Arctinus (*Sack of Troy*), according to Phanias (fr. 32, 33 Wehrli); Podlecki 1969, 120. Aristotle (fr. 565 Rose) told how Homer won a contest against not Hesiod but Syagrus, author of another epic about the Trojan War; see Huxley 1974, 208; Jacoby on Philochorus *FGrHist* 328 F 213, IIIb (Suppl.) I, 580–81. Heraclitus supposed that Homer and Archilochus competed in contests, though not necessarily against each other (22 B 42 DK).

12. West 1978, 319; Hess 1960, 47–53.

13. Alcidamas did not approve of orators who spoke from written texts (*Soph.* 13, 14, 22, 31–34; text and translation in Muir 2001); in his account of Homer's death the fisher-boys improvised (*eschediasan*) their riddle. On improvisation in epic, see Willcock 1977, 53; Richardson 1981, 5–6; Collins 2001, 11–27.

14. Cf. how in Aristophanes' *Peace* Trygaeus helps establish peace by rejecting the son of the general Lamachus who sings only of war in a contest with another boy (1288), and in the *Frogs* how the god Dionysus judges on moral grounds in favor of Aeschylus over Euripides. Plato argues that Homer's poetry should have no place in his ideal state because it does not inspire critical thinking (*Resp.* 606e–607a); see also chapter on Homer and Hess 1960, 59–60. Cf. also Anacreontic 2.22; Ar., *Ran.* 1032–36; Plut., *Apotheg. Lac.* 223a = Aelian, *Var. Hist.* 13.19; Richardson 1981, 2–3; Wilamowitz 1916, 404–6.

15. Friedel 1879, 236 n.1. Farnell 1896–1909, I: 170 n.*w* lists cults of Zeus Nemeios also in

Argos and Caria; the Oeneōn (later Oenoē) was a city east of Naupactus (Gomme 1956, II 402, 409–10; West 2003a, 343 n.16), but the site of the Temple of Zeus has not been identified, Stillwell et al. 1976, 993.

16. For the *topos* of mistaking the site of death, cf. Cambyses (Hdt. 3.64.3–5), Epaminondas (*Suda*, Epsilon 1949), Hannibal (Paus. 8.11.10–11), and Henry IV's Jerusalem chamber; Fontenrose 1978, 59–60; see Hornblower 1991, I 511–12.

17. Chroust 1973, 178–81. On traditional themes in the narrative, see also Kivilo 2010, 33–35.

18. Two other sons of Phegeus murdered the hero Alcmeon and were themselves killed by Alcmeon's two sons (Apollod. 3.7.4).

19. Cf. Plut., *Conv, sept. sap.* 162e. Nilsson 1906, 383–84 suggests that the story of Hesiod's death is an aetiological myth for the ritual, which may have involved mourning and a representation of hanging, like the festival of Ariadne at Crete; cf. Burkert 1983, 64 n.26.

20. Kivilo 2010, 57–58 argues that the story may even be earlier than the fifth century.

21. The word *dikaios* connotes legitimacy in Soph., *Ajax* 547; cf. *Hist. An.* 586a 13, *Pol.* 1262a 24. On *Op.* 271 see Hiller 1873, n.3; West 1978, 225. By a similar process, Hesiod's description of the rulers of the *polis* (*Op.* 264) became the basis of Aristotle's anecdote about the Thespians disapproving of trades and agriculture; Huxley 1974, 208–9.

22. Gabathuler 1937, 91–92.

23. The information about Hesiod may in fact have come from Eratosthenes' *Anterinys* (fr. 19 Powell); Fraser 1972, II 902 n.200. On that poem's contents, see Hiller 1872, 80–93. Euphorion of Chalkis also wrote a poem on Hesiod, but we have no indication of its contents.

24. Hiller 1872, 81–86, cf. Pollux 5.42, Plut., *Conv. sept. sap.*162d–f.

25. Since there is only one *theos xenios* (Zeus), perhaps the plural "gods of hospitality" in *Cert.* §14 were inferred incorrectly from a Homeric allusion in Eratosthenes' text, like *Dii patri kai allois athanatoisi* (*Il* 13.818). For cases where *theoi* means Zeus, see Fraenkel 1950, II 182; Nagelsbach 1884, 121–22.

26. For other examples of attention to minor characters, cf. Callim., *Hymn* 6.94–110, esp. Erysichthon, who "ate the mongoose at which the little mice trembled" (reading *malouris* with Gow 1967, 595–97; cf. Benton 1969, 262). In Ap. Rhod., *Argon.* 1.311–16, as Jason departs, the priestess Iphis "is left there on the side of the road, as the old are by the young." Plutarch relates that Hesiod's servant Troilus was killed along with him, and a rock was named for him (*Conv. sept. sap.* 162d).

27. Plutarch combines both accounts in *De soll. an.* 984d. Cf. Eratosthenes' story of Eupolis' loyal dog (*Nat. An.* 10.41 = T 5 KA, *PCG* V, 295)); in his *Erigone* (fr. 22–27 Powell) Icarius' dog leads his daughter to her father's body, identifies his murderers, and the girl hangs herself; Hiller 1872, 95–97; Fraser 1972, II 903 n.202; for the story, schol. *Il.* 10.29. The dog's name in Apollod. 3.14.7 is Maera; cf. Eratosthenes fr. 16.7 Powell. But according to Pollux 5.42, it is Sirius.

28. Cf. Epimenides' sacrifice of two young men to remove blood guilt, 3A1.16–19 DK/ Neanthes *FGrHist* 84 F 16. For other examples, Burkert 1983, 4 n.10; also Leos' daughters, Paus. 1.5.2, Fontenrose 1978, L 44; Erechtheus' daughters, Philochorus *FGrHist* 328 F 85, Fontenrose 1978, L 32, Apollod. 3.15.4, Eur. *TrGF* 5.1, F 370.65–72.

29. Other belly-prophets were called Eurycleses or sons of Eurycles; schol. Pl., *Soph.* 252c, p. 44 Greene; see esp. Katz and Volk 2000, 124–25; Dodds 1951, 70–71.

30. On mythical themes in this narrative, see also Compton 2006, 80–86.

31. The idea that Hesiod was extraordinarily long-lived may be connected with the lines attributed to Hesiod about the length of human life (fr. 304 M–W = Plut. *De def. or*, 415c–d), which appear to claim that the human lifespan is 108 years; see Poirier 2003, 194–98. Cf. also stories about the productive old age of Simonides and of Sophocles.

32. On Hesiod's longevity, see Huxley 1974, 207. Wilamowitz 1916, 407 n.2, suggests that the poet's second youth came through his son Stesichorus (but cf. the rationalization in the oracle quoted in Ps.-Plut., *Vit. Hom.* 1.4 (= no. 319 PW, I p. 128), which gives Homer a second life through his poetry, *phthimenos d'eti pollon agērōs.*

33. Doppelgänger also provided a convenient means of solving textual problems; Lefkowitz 1991, 82.

34. On the epigram *FGE* 582–83, see Page 1981, 159–60; also McKay 1959, 1–5; Brelich 1958, 321.

35. See esp. Scodel 1981, 301–20, who suggests (302) that the chorus in Eur., *HF* 657 refers to this story of Hesiod's return to life, and Kivilo 2010, 31–32. The notion of double death and life are particularly appropriate for Heracles; see Bond 1981, 231–32. Cf. how Callimachus says he hopes to avoid old age by becoming a cricket (fr. 1.29–36): Pfeiffer 1960, 116–26; cf. Anacreontic 34.15; Macleod 1976, 41–43.

36. According to Paus. 9.83.3, the oracle said a crow would lead them to the site where the bones were hidden, Fontenrose 1978, L 42. In myth the bird represents Apollo; ibid. Q 191. Cf. also the story of Archilochus' death; Nagy 1999, 301–2; Clay 2004, 75.

37. On the heroes, Hdt. 1.67.2–4; Fontenrose 1978, 74–75, Q 89, 80, 164, and cf. Rhesus' bones, Q 188. On the bones of Orestes, see Boedeker 1993, 171. On hero cults and bones, see Compton 2006, 84 n.35; Clay 2004, 75.

38. On the sources used by the author of the *Contest* see West 1967, 444–50; for English translation, West 2003a.

39. The author of the treatise was certainly more than a "compiler"; cf. Wilamowitz 1916, 400; West 1967, 449.

40. See fr. 25 Sandbach. For Plutarch's knowledge of Boeotia, cf. also fr. 34, 71; West 1978, 67 n.4; Plutarch's account of the festival of Agrionia, *Quaest. Graec.* 291 is an example of such specialized knowledge; Russell 1973, 42.

41. Russell 1973, 50–51.

42. Problems with chronology are emphasized by Tzetzes, who relied on Proclus, who in turn used Plutarch's commentary on Hesiod's text; West 1978, 68.

43. Plutarch has Hesiod win the contest by out-improvising Homer (*Conv. sept. sap.* 153f); West 1978, 68, 319.

44. See schol. Callim., *Aet.* 1.2 Pf; Kambylis 1965, 55–60.

45. On Proclus, Kivilo 2010, 8 n.1; West 1978, 68–69, text in Westermann 1845, 45–49.

46. Other poets discover their talent when young. Archilochus encountered the Muses while he was still living in his father's house (E_1 II.22–39 Clay); the boy Pindar fell asleep and woke up with his mouth full of honey (*Vit. Amb.* p. 1.7–9 Dr). Kambylis 1965, 94–103. The third-century B.C. poet Callimachus says that he had his own "dream" about the Muses

when he was first getting a beard (schol. fr. 2.18 p. II Pf). The third-century A.D. poet Quintus of Smyrna, perhaps with such passages in mind, claims that the Muses put song in his heart when the down began to cover his cheeks, 12.308–9.

47. See esp. Grau i Gujarro 2009, 442–48. On the Hellenistic practice of writing fictitious epigrams about particularly appropriate deaths, see Wehrli 1973, 194; Wehrli 1974, 105–6. On Diogenes' interest in death scenes, esp. in epigrams, see Mejer 1978, 32, 37, 49–50; Momigliano 1993, 72.

CHAPTER 2: *Homer*

1. For texts and translations of the later Lives of Homer, see esp. Gigante 1996 and West 2003.

2. The Muses gave Hesiod "inspired song" (*aoidēn*/*thespin*) so that he could sing "what will be and what was before," i.e., what would be impossible for a mortal to know without divine assistance.

3. Like the poet of the *Iliad,* Odysseus is careful to give credit to the Muses for the singer's ability to describe what he could not have seen: "Either a Muse taught you, the daughter of Zeus, or Apollo," (*Od.* 8.488). In later versions of the story, Thamyris' maiming was understood to take the form of blindness, probably on the analogy of Demodocus and Homer; Lesky 1966a, 169–75; Brillante 1991, 429–37, 453; and Clay 2004, 152.

4. Cf. the story that the poet Stesichorus became blind when he criticized Helen for going to Troy and recovered his sight when he wrote a song that said she never went there (the so-called Palinode; *PMGF* 192); see Graziosi 2002, 147–50.

5. More poets are added to the genealogies as time goes on; Jacoby on Damastes, *FGrHist* 5 F 11, Ia 476–77.

6. Some of these suggestions may have been intended to amuse, such as Hermesianax's idea that ēoiē was Hesiod's beloved and the model for others "like her" (*ēoiē*; fr. 7.24–26 Powell).

7. On traveling singers, see Hunter and Rutherford 2009, 6–7. According to Maslov 2009, 1–38, the term *aoidos* denotes a solo performer.

8. Both ancient and modern scholars have tried to propose alternative sites; see Wilson 2009, 46–51.

9. Similarly, the opening lines of the *Margites* were intended to identify its author as Homer: "To Colophon came a certain old man and holy bard, servant of the Muses and far-shooting Apollo, holding in his hands a melodious lyre" (fr. 1 W). See Griffith 1983, 46 n.37; Graziosi 2002, 67.

10. At least a hundred years later, the historian Thucydides claimed that Homer came from Chios (3.104.5). The author of the second Life of Homer attributed to Plutarch (2) may have had Semonides' poem in mind when he said that *Simonides* thought Homer was a Chian (*PMG* 652), Burkert 1979, 57; West 1974, 180; cf. Lefkowitz 1976a, 73. Bacchylides also could assume that his audience would understand that when he spoke of "the man from Boeotia" he meant Hesiod (*Ode* 5.191–94; cf. Hesiod fr. 359 M–W).

11. See also Hellanicus *FGrHist* 4 F 20, I 111; Allen 1924, 42–50.

12. See esp. Graziosi 2002, 33–34, 36–37, 47; Collins 2001, 11–27.

13. See also *Ol.* 1. 25–52, where Pindar offers two explanations of how Pelops got his ivory shoulder, and *Nem.* 5.14–18, where he refuses to tell the story of the death of Phocus.

14. See esp. Antipater of Thessalonica 72 *GP* = Ps.-Plut. *Vit. Hom.* 1.4 = *Anth. Plan.* 296, and *Anth. Plan.* 295, 297–99. Traditions about other poets' connections with Egypt were also developed during this period; Lefkowitz 2007, 101–13. On the development of local traditions, see esp. Kivilo 2011.

15. For a more detailed discussion of this fragment, see Lefkowitz 2009, 520–22. On the contents of the *Mouseion*, see esp. Muir 2001, xix–xx.

16. As Bacchylides tells the story, Heracles met the shade of Meleager, who was in Hades. Meleager describes how he was killed by his mother. Heracles asks Meleager if he has a sister, and marries her (Deianeira); but she becomes angry at him for acquiring a concubine, and murders him by giving him a garment anointed with poison (*Odes* 5.165–75, 15.23–35).

17. Cf. Sosthenes' first-century B.C. biography of the poet Archilochus, based on an account by Demeas written in prose with long quotations in verse from Archilochus' poetry, which includes describing a battle in which the poet participated (Catalogue II, fr. 3 Clay 2004).

18. Text in Keaney and Lamberton 1996, with notes p. 57; see also text and translation in West 2003a.

19. Normally the male god who accompanies the Muses is Apollo (e.g., *Scut.* 201–6, Pind. *Pyth.* 1.1–2). The creator of this story may have had in mind the passage in the *Iliad* where Hermes spies Polymele in the dance (*Il.* 16.181–83, cf. *Hymn. Hom.* 5.117–18). Cf. the story that Plato's father was Apollo; Riginos 1976, §1.

20. In other versions of the story (e.g., Euagon of Samos, 535 *FGrHist* F 2), Homer's father is identified as the river-god Meles on the basis of the name Melesigenes (which actually must have meant "he who cares for his relatives"); see Gigante 1996, 164; Graziosi 2002, 74–75.

21. On the etymology of *homēros*, see Chantraine 1983, II 797.

22. Two versions of the oracle are given (also preserved as *Anth. Pal.* 14.65, 66).

23. Text as emended and supplemented by Avezzù 1982, 50; cf. Renehan 1971, 85–86. On the translation, see Muir 2001, 39 and Edwards 2007, 52. The context for the anecdote may be preserved in the final section (18) of the second-century A.D. *Contest between Homer and Hesiod* (*Certamen*, discussed below), which used Alcidamas' *Mouseion* as one of its sources (14). Imitations of the epitaph are preserved in grave inscriptions; Gigante 1996, 169.

24. See esp. Trenkner 1958, 30.

25. In another version of the story, attributed to the Smyrneans, Homer's mother, Cretheis, was a nymph and his father was the River Meles (*Cert.* §2).

26. See esp. Heath 2009, 267: "Anyone inclined to draw unfavourable conclusions about Heraclides or Ephorus from the fantastic nature of their constructions should reflect on the impression we should have of Aristotle if the *Poetics* had been lost and we were dependent on the fragments . . ."

27. See also Graziosi 2002, 35–40.

28. An inscription seems to confirm that Cynaethus, as Hippostratus says, recited the Homeric poems in Sicily at the end of the sixth century; Burkert 1979, 56; Fehling 1979, 193–34; Graziosi 2002, 34.

29. Compton 2006, 71–73, 73 nn.22, 23.

30. On the riddle, see Fontenrose 1978, L 80, 384–85; Graziosi 2002, 60–61; Compton 2006, 73–75.

31. Cf. the poet Xenophanes' complaint that his expertise is not appreciated (21B 2.1–12, I 128–29 DK), echoed by Socrates (Pl., *Apol*. 36d).

32. According to the scholion on *Resp*. 10.600b (p. 273 Greene), some authorities said that Creophylus offered Homer hospitality and took the *Iliad* (!) from him. See Allen 1924, 145; Burkert 1972, 79.

33. Skiadas 1965, 17–32.

34. The author of the *Contest* cites Alcidamas and Eratosthenes in his account of Hesiod's death (14); see chap. 1 n.10. He gives the names of five different sources for Homer's parentage (3) but prefaces most information with an inexplicit "some say" or "they say." On the connection between the *Contest* and Alcidamas' *Mouseion*, see Muir 2001, xix–xx; Edwards 2007, 52–53.

35. See also observations about the author of the *Contest* in the chapter on Hesiod.

36. Skiadas 1965, 32–37.

37. In some manuscripts of Plutarch's *Symposium of the Seven Sages* (*Mor*. 154a), the same conundrum is attributed to Lesches, the author of the *Little Iliad* (for testimonia, see West 2003b, 118–21), and its solution is attributed to Hesiod. Erbse 1996, 313, suggests that the exchange first appeared in Alcidamas.

38. On the parallel between these poetic contests, see Hess 1960, 21–23; Erbse 1996, 311.

39. On the date of the Pseudo-Herodotean *Vita*, see Wilamowitz 1916, 414–16, and Graziosi 2002, 73–74. For translations of it, see Appendix 1 and West 2003a.

40. On fraudulent history, see Syme 1968, 118–25. Cf. Syme 1971, 266.

41. On Alciphron's names, see Casevitz 2002, 247–58.

42. Syme 1972, 13–17.

43. Pseudo-Herodotus makes no mention here or elsewhere in his narrative of the *Margites*, a poem attributed to Homer because its first lines describe an old man, a divine bard, arriving in Colophon. See Graziosi 2002, 66–72.

44. According to Pliny the Elder, who relied on Duris of Samos, Lysippus, and several other famous sculptors, also had no teachers; see Kris and Kurz 1979, 14–20.

45. As the twelfth-century A.D. scholar Eustathius explains in his *Commentary on the Iliad*. (1.311), Homer wanted posterity to remember the names of his acquaintances, whether for good (Mentes, Mentor, Phemius, Tychius) or ill (Thersites; Bell 1983, 3–4); cf. also the scholion on *Il*. 7.220.

46. If *homēros* in Cumae came to mean blind man, it would have been because Homer was a blind man, rather than vice versa, as the author of this *Vita* suggests; see Chantraine 1983, 797.

47. On how narratives are invented to answer literary questions, see Graziosi 2002, 193. The discrepancy in style between major and minor works was noted in antiquity; e.g., Statius assumed that verses in a "more relaxed style" (*stilo remissiore*) belonged to the great poets' youth (Pref. *Silvae* I, *Batrachomyomachia* T5 Allen, p. 163 = West 2003a, 262–63). Of these comic poems, *Batrachomyomachia* and *Margites* were also attributed to Pigres (*Suda*,

Pi 1551 = T4 Allen); on the (Hellenistic) date of the *Batrachomyomachia*, see esp. Sens 2006, 216–18. Pseudo-Herodotus does not mention the *Margites*, even though Aristotle regarded it as a model of comedy (*Poet.* 1448b24).

48. On the development of fictional narratives to "satisfy interest in juvenilia," see Syme 1972, 9.

49. Aristotle (*Rhet.* I.15.1375b 30) notes that the Athenians used two lines from the *Catalogue of Ships* as proof of the antiquity of their connection with Salamis (*Il.* 2.557–58); see Kirk 1985, 208–9. Other ancient scholars claimed that Solon (Diog. Laert. 1.46; Plut., *Vit. Sol.* 10.2) or Pisistratus (Strabo, *Geogr.* 9.1.10) added those lines to Homer's text. Aristarchus' pupil Chaeris had doubts about the passage in the *Odyssey* where Athena returns to the house of Erechtheus in Athens (schol. *Od.* 7.79–80); see Hainsworth 1988, 325; Heubeck 1998, 38. The third-century historian Hereas of Megara (486 *FGrHist* F 1) thought that Pisistratus had inserted a line specifying Theseus among the heroes Odysseus wanted to see towards the end of his visit to the world of the dead (*Od.* 11.631). Strabo says that there was a Megarian parody of *Il.* 2.557–58 (*Geogr.* 9.1.10) that removed the Athenians from the *Catalogue of Ships*. Daphidas of Telmisa (*Suda*, Delta 99) claimed that the Athenians did not fight in Troy (for testimonia, see Allen 1924, 234–38, 246).

50. On Creophylus, see n.32.

51. Wilamowitz (1916, 413) characterized it as a *Volksbuch* drawing on old Ionian poetry and narrative; but the Pseudo-Herodotean Life does not depict for an illiterate audience "the lowest sphere of life," as Parnell (1715, 25) thought. On the modern traditions about Homer on Chios, see Rhomaios 1986, 21–26.

52. Jacoby 1949, 133. On the literary character of local histories, see esp. Fowler 2001, 115.

53. Winter 1933, 194.

54. Kirk 1973, 289–90; Silk 1985, 16.

55. Webster 1964, 114–15; Williams 1978, 88–89.

56. Webster 1964, pl. iv.

57. On the honeycomb as a metaphor for poetic talent, see also the chapter on Pindar. On the statue in Constantinople, see Gigante 1996, 177–78.

58. Texts in West 2003a, 404–49.

59. Cf. Page 1981, 338–39; Skiadas 1965, 169–72.

60. See esp. Fowler 2004, 224–25.

61. Heath 1998, 33–38.

62. Ibid., 30–33; according to Lucian, the Syrians considered fish sacred (*Syr. d.* 14); Lightfoot 2003, 356. Stories about Homer's Egyptian origins (see also Diod. Sic. 1.96 and *AP* vii.7) are probably Hellenistic; cf. Gigante 1996, 174.

CHAPTER 3: *Eight Archaic Poets*

1. On Archilochus' dates, see Kivilo 2010, 111–15. His exact dates were not known in the late fifth century when Glaucus of Rhegium sought to establish them in his treatise *On Poets and Musicians*, *FHG* 2–6; Lanata 1963, 270–77.

2. See esp. Graham 1978, 84–93; Clay 2004, 1–7.

3. No. 232 PW = 295b W; Archilochus' father, Telesicles, received an oracle (no. 230 PW) to found a city on "the holy island."

4. For text and translation of the Glaucus epitaph, see also Clay 2004, 69.

5. On the dangers of inference from the literary evidence, see esp. Owen 2003, 1–18.

6. On the dramatic fictions of iambic poetry, Nagy 1999, 243–52.

7. Cf. Satyrus' Life of Euripides (F 6 fr. 39.ix Schorn), quoting Aristophanes apropos of Euripides, "he is like what he makes his characters say" (fr. 694 KA, *PCG* III.2, p. 356).

8. Lefkowitz 1976b, 182; Kivilo 2010, 116.

9. If authentic, this would be the earliest extant epigram; but these lines may be part of a longer elegiac poem, see Page 1981, 147. On the exaggerated importance given to the shield epigram by biographers, see Lloyd-Jones 1971, 39.

10. See also Gagné 2009, 263. Cf. the analogous "child of woe" (Men., *Dysc.* 88; Handley 1965, 144–45); "child of bad luck" (*PMG* 929 f. 5); Kassel 1979, 19, perhaps originally from an insult, like Alcaeus, fr. 72.8–9, or Homer. *Epigr.* 18. See also Nagy 1999, 247–48. Tarditi 1956, 125–26 suggested that Enipo might be a diminuitive of a name from Asia, such as Sappho, Nanno, or Theano, without negative connotations; see also Kivilo 2010, 93.

11. Cf. how characters in Aristophanes' comedies suggest that Euripides' mother sold vegetables; on rhetorical tactics, see esp. Rotstein 2007, 144–46; Rotstein 2010, 300–317.

12. See also Clay 2004, 6–7, 28.

13. See esp. Arist., *Rhet*., I.5.1361a 34–36; Clay 2004, 6.

14. Clay 2004, 9–39.

15. Cf. Nagy 1999, 304 n.3.

16. On Mnesiepes' inscription, see Clay 2004, 10–24; Clay 2001–2002, 97–112; Hawkins 2009, 11–18.

17. Archilochus' encounter with the Muses "recalls and is possibly a challenge to Hesiod's account" (Clay, 2004, 15). Cf. Tzetzes' version of Hesiod's encounter with the Muses (*Theog.* 22–34): "They say that some nine women came up, and picked twigs of Heliconian laurel, and fed him with them; thus he acquired his learning and poetic art." The Christian Tzetzes turned the Muses into nine women, who, instead of giving him a laurel branch and a "sacred voice," simply feed him twigs from the branches; there is no trace of the Muses' dramatic speech about their divine knowledge and human ignorance. West 1964, 141–42.

18. For the various versions of the oracle, see esp. Clay 2004, 99–100.

19. Miralles and Portùlas (1983, 63–80) suggest that a ritual to Demeter may lie behind the story of Archilochus' encounter with the Muses (Pausanias was told that the rites of Demeter were brought to Paros by Cleoboea, who was shown with Archilochus' grandfather Tellis in the Lesche at Delphi, in a painting by Polygnotus; 10.28.3 = T121 Tarditi). Clay (2004, 158 n.60) notes that "there is an interesting parallel" between the rude remarks made by Archilochus and the women and the joke-telling in Eleusinian ritual. But Ornaghi (2009, 117–79) argues that the ritual was the Thesmophoria. A later fragment of the inscription refers to a cult of Dionysus; see esp. Suárez de la Torre 2000, 641–42 and n.22 below. If the story refers to a ritual, its source is more likely to have been Archilochus' own poetry, rather than oral tradition (cf. Clay 2004, 14). West (fr. 251) finds possible remnants of verse in E_1, III, 31–35 Clay; West 1974, 24–25. Biographies of poets, such as those written by Satyrus (a contemporary of Mnesiepes), were distinctly literary and were read to literate audiences.

In essence the story is an amusing variant on another literary tradition, Hesiod's encounter with the Muses in the *Theog.* 26–34. If the story was based on a poem rather than on a ritual, it would help to explain why there is no specific reference to Demeter in the narrative. Why would Mnesiepes have wanted to assign the great goddess to *damnatio memoriae* (cf. Ornaghi 2009, 179)?

20. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston inv. no. 98.887; Clay 2004, pl. 21. See Momigliano 1993, 27–28, and esp. Clay 2004, 55–57.

21. On eating as a subject of invective (as in Pindar, *Pyth*. 2.52–55), see Brown 2006, 36–46.

22. Clay 2001–2002, 97–112; 2004, 16–23.

23. See esp. Hawkins 2008, 108–10.

24. On the myth of the Lemnian women, see esp. Vian 1976, 26–28.

25. Hawkins 2009, 15–18.

26. Graham 1978, 83–84; Clay 2004, 34.

27. Jacoby, on *FGrHist* 502 F 1, IIB, 421–22; Graham 1978, 84.

28. Catalogue I 3b Clay; other cases of oracular commands to worship violent heroes include the cases of Cleomedes of Astypalea (Paus. 6.9.6–8; 88 PW) or Euthycles of Western Locri (388 PW), and Theagenes of Thasos (389–91 PW); Brelich 1958, 319–20; Nagy 1999, 306–7.

29. Roman poets (who might never have visited Paros) supposed that Archilochus was buried in the necropolis near the harbor in Paros; see Clay 2004, 34–35; Brown 2001, 429–32.

30. Clay 2004, 25–26.

31. Hawkins 2008, 97 n.9, 109.

32. Nagy 1999, 307–8; Compton 2006, 53–55.

33. On similarities between the daughters of Lycambes and women punished by the gods in myth, see Suárez de la Torre 2000, 639–58. For arguments in favor of the story's historicity, see Carey 1986, 60–67.

34. See esp. Hawkins 2008, 101–8. Cf. how Pindar characterizes his rivals as being vastly inferior to himself (e.g, *Ol*. 1.115b–16; *Pyth*. 4.248–49.

35. Irwin 1998, 182–83; Gagné 2009, 267–70.

36. For testimonia, see Hipponax, see West 1989, I 110–11; Lefkowitz 1976b, 184–85; Hawkins 2008, 101–8. Cf. the story that Shakespeare attacked two brothers, Schoenbaum 1970, 79–82.

37. See esp. Kivolo 2010, 105.

38. On the location of the Archilocheion, see Clay 2004, 35–38.

39. On Stesichorus' dates, see Kivilo 2010, 79–82.

40. See also Kivilo 2010, 85.

41. West 1971, 302–3. On the possibility that there were two traditions about his origin, see esp. Kivilo 2010, 85–86.

42. The Parian Marble says Stesichorus arrived in Greece almost a century later (*PMGF* TA31, but this could have been another Stesichorus (T 6 Campbell); cf. Compton 2006, 89 n.16.

43. Calame 1977, I 88–89; Kivilo 2010, 72, 77–79.

44. Haslam 1978, 29–30; Lefkowitz 1991, 192–93.

45. Gow–Page 1968, on Antipater 485; Nisbet–Hubbard 1978, 336.

46. Cf. also Isoc. x.64. All ancient testimony about the Palinode is collected and translated by Davison in 1968, 202–25 and Campbell 1991, T 192–93; for discussion, see esp. Davies 1982, 7–16; Sider 1989, 423–31; Kivilo 2010, 73–75.

47. In Eur., *Hel.* 31–48, Helen describes how she was taken by Hermes to Egypt for the duration of the war; on Euripides' sources, see Kannicht 1969, I 24–26, II 25–32.

48. Cf. how Pindar refuses to tell the usual tale about how Pelops was cut up and served to the gods at a banquet—"It is impossible for me to call a god a glutton. I stand in revolt. Abundant losses are the lot of slanderers" (*Ol.* 1.52–53)—or how he criticizes Homer for having favored Odysseus over Ajax (*Nem.* 7.20–21); Finkelberg 1998, 170, and on the function of first-person statements in argumentation, Thomas 2000, 243–44.

49. See Davison 1968, 222, Podlecki 1969, 128.

50. On Socrates' use of Stesichorus in the *Phaedrus*, see Demos 1997, 235–49. In Plato's *Protagoras* the interlocutors quote Simonides out of order and out of context (*PMG* 542), and Socrates states that Simonides was often forced to write poems of praise against his will (*Protag.* 346b). But when the poem is read without Plato's commentary, it can be found to contain ideas customarily found in odes of praise; see Dickie 1978, 12–33. On the *Protagoras* passage, see Demos 1999, 11–38.

51. See esp. Sider 1989, 429–31; Graziosi 2002, 147–50. Archilochus was terrified by the epiphany of the Muses (E_1 II 36 Clay), as was Anchises by Aphrodite (*Hymn. Hom.* 5.181–84).

52. For a another example of how a poem can be cited as evidence of biographical event, cf. how in the Euripides *Vita* (*TGrF* 5.1, T 1 IV), lines from the *Melanippe* (*TGrF* 5.1, F 494.1–3) are cited as "proof" of the story that Euripides apologized to the women of Athens for his attacks on them, a story that comes straight from Aristophanes.

53. According to Hesiod (fr. 275 M–W) Hera took away Tiresias' sight but Zeus gave him the gift of prophecy (Hes., fr. 725 M–W). The fifth-century mythographer Pherecydes offered a different account (*FGrHist* 3 F 92): Athena blinded Tiresias because he saw her bathing but gave him the gift of prophecy in compensation (as in Callim., *Hymn* 5.119–30); Bulloch 1985, 18.

54. The unusual design of Stesichorus' tomb, which had "eight columns, eight courses of steps, and eight angles" (*PMGF* TA 37) sounds Hellenistic; Kurtz–Boardman 1971, 302; Clay 2004, 152; Compton 2006, 90. The tomb's construction was said to be the origin of the phrase "eight all round," and a dice throw of eight was called "Stesichorus" (*PMGF* TA 36, from Pollux, *Onom.* 9.100).

55. Perhaps Stesichorus' original statement concerned tyranny in general, rather than that of a specific individual, since the first-century B.C. mythographer Conon tells the same story about Stesichorus and about Gelon, tyrant of Syracuse from 491–478/7 B.C. (*PMGF* TA 10 = *FGrHist* 26 F 1.4.2).

56. The idea of burning victims in a bronze bull may have been inspired by a Carthaginian ritual; Farnell 1932, II 117; Hinz 2001, 36–41. After Phalaris was deposed, the citizens of Acragas threw the bull into the sea; schol. Pind. *Pyth.* 1.195 (II 29 Dr) = Timaeus, *FGrHist* 566 F 28c). Later versions of the bull story are listed in Bernardini et al. 1995, 361.

57. On the personality of Phalaris in the letters, see Russell 1988, 104–5, and Hinz 2001, 99–126; and on the purpose of the letters, see Rosenmeyer 2001, 224–31. In Hercher 1873, see (e.g.) letters 63 (expressing appreciation of his poetry), 103 (praising Stesichorus' daughters), 92 and 109 (urging him not to lead a revolt against him), and 54 (awarding heroic honors to the poet after his death). But he also threatens adversaries with the bull (e.g., 66, 112, 113, 115); Russell 1988, 95.

58. The chorus of Alcman's *partheneion* speaks of a Lydian cap as "the glory of dark-eyed maidens" (*PMGF* 1.68–69).

59. E.g., *PMGF* TA2 = *POxy* 2506, TA 18 = Paus. 3.15.2; Alcman was "according to Crates (mistakenly) a Lydian from Sardis" (*Suda*, Alpha 1289).

60. My thanks to Bell (1983, 161) and Griffin (1982, x) for pointing out mistakes in my earlier treatment of the question of Alcman's origin.

61. The fourth-century historian Philochorus said he was an Athenian from Aphidna (*FGrHist* 328 F 15 = fr. 2 Gerber). Cf. the speculation about Homer's birthplace, based on considerations of dialect and geography.

62. Schol. Pl. *Laws* 1629a–b, p. 301 Greene = T 3 Gerber. Cf. the oracle ordering the Cyreneans to summon a lawgiver from Mantinea in Arcadia, 69 PW; D'Alessio 2009, 154–55, and on oracles summoning lame or maimed kings, Fontenrose 1978, 121.

63. When discussing Tyrtaeus' origins, Plato says that Theognis came from *Sicilian* Megara (*Laws* 1629a–b), because it better suits his purpose to have him be a foreigner (schol. *Leg.* 630a, p. 301 Greene).

64. Rather than emphasize Tyrtaeus' positive achievements, Compton 2006, 119–29 stresses his deformity in order to contend that he was treated as a scapegoat.

65. See esp. Van Wees 1999, 2–14; Bowie 2001, 46–47.

66. Jacoby on Philochorus *FGrHist* 328 F 216, IIIb (Suppl.) I 583–84.

67. Friedländer 1969, 237–41 attributes the poem to Demagetus of Sparta (on whom, see Gow–Page 1965, II 223–24), cf. *EG* 2674–77 = *Anth. Pal.* 7.432.

68. The *Suda* gives no indication of the site of Ibycus' death, but Antipater of Sidon, perhaps on the analogy of the story of Arion and the dolphin, says that pirates killed him as he went from an island into a trackless wilderness; cranes heard his cries (26–81 *HE*). See also Compton 2006, 87–88; cf. esp. 87 n.3–4.

69. There is also the curious story that the citharode Stesichorus and Aeschylus the *aulos*-player (presumably the tragic poet) were killed by the pirate Hicanus ("Capable," *Suda*, s.v. *epitēdeuma,* "profession," Epsilon 2681 = Stesichorus *PMGF* TA 44).

70. The story of Euripides' death is based on his drama the *Bacchae*. In Homer the cry of the cranes warns the Pygmies that the cranes are about to attack them (*Il.* 3.3–6.); their queen Gerana had been turned into a crane (*geranos*) and rejected by them (Ath. ix.393e).

71. The Roman poet Horace, who presumably knew all of Alcaeus' poetry, speaks about both his political and love poetry (*Carm.* 1.32.3–12 = Alcaeus fr. 430V).

72. See also Compton 2006, 112.

73. Cf. Page 1955, 174–79. Biographers cited in *POxy* 2506 F 98 (T 9 Campbell) believed that Alcaeus died during one of his returns from exile, though they were not certain which; perhaps the idea came from a prediction in a poem.

74. Cf. also Dion. Hal., *Vett. Cens.* 5.421.

75. On Sappho's dates, see Hutchinson 2001, 139–40; Kivilo 2010, 195–98.

76. Dover 1978, 174–75; Compton 2006, 98 n.15.

77. See esp. Yatromanolakis 2007, 326–28; Compton 2006, 96–97.

78. Cf. also Serv. Dan. on Vergil, *Aen.* 3. 279 (Koerte–Thierfelder 1959, II 96).

79. Plato Comicus fr. 1 KA alludes to this myth (*PCG* VII, p. 509). Other comedies about Phaon included Alexis' *Leucadia* or *Drapetides* (*PCG* II, p. 97), Amphis' *Leucadia* (*PCG* II, pp. 224–25); Antiphanes' *Leucadia* (*PCG* II, p. 387), and Diphilus' *Leucadia* (*PCG* V, p. 81). The idea of hordes of women in erotic pursuit of men was a favorite comic theme, famously exploited by Aristophanes in the *Lysistrata* but also the subject of the fifth-century poet Cratinus' *Drapetides,* about the women of Sybaris (*PCG* IV, p. 147), and presumably also Diphilus' *Lemniae*; see also Kivilo 2010, 181 n.73. Eastern Greek women were thought to be particularly licentious; Yatromanolakis 2007, 186–96.

80. Yatromanolakis 2007, 217–18. This Leucas appears to be the same "white rock" (*leukas petrē*) that the souls of Penelope's suitors pass on their way west to Hades (*Od.* 24.11). Lefkowitz 1973, 116; Nagy 1973, 141–43, 172–77; Snyder 1989, 4–6.

81. Lobel–Page 1963, fr. 211 iii; fr. 211b Voigt; Snyder 1989, 4.

82. Dover 1978, 174; Yatromanolakis 2007, 294–307.

83. Cf. also the lament of the "I" in Sappho's newly discovered "Tithonus" poem; West 2005, 5–6; also Kivilo 2010, 181–82.

84. For specifics, see Clay 2004, 150–51.

85. According to Strabo (14.1.30), the Teans colonized Abdera in order to avoid being ruled by the Persians.

86. For an attempt to set all this information into an historical context, see Rosenmeyer 1992, 12–15.

87. See Rosenmeyer 1992, plates II and III.

88. Cf. Anacreon *PMG* 388, 424.

89. Sophocles was said to have choked on an unripe grape at the festival of the Choes, *TrGF* 4, T 1.14.

90. See esp. Rosenmeyer 1992, 50–73.

91. See also Yatromanolakis 2007, 351–52.

92. Ibid., 348–50.

CHAPTER 4: *Solon*

1. Ruschenbusch 1994, 368.

2. Aristotle's account of the *Seisachtheia* (*Ath. Pol.* 6) was turned into biography in the second-century B.C. epitomizer Heraclides Lembus' one-sentence summary (*Pol.* 3 Dilts): "Solon established laws for the Athenians, and when he needed to cancel debts, created the so-called *Seisachtheia*. When some grew angry at him because of the laws, he went into exile in Egypt." See Momigliano 1993, 104.

3. Jacoby on *FGrHist* 324 F 34, IIIb (Suppl.) I, 144–46, and 328 F 114, IIIb (Suppl.) I, 448–49.

4. See also Irwin 2005, 263; but later biographers distinguished themselves from historians, see below n.36.

5. On the meaning of the word *agora*, see esp. Passow/Crönert 1912, 15, and on the verses, Irwin 2005, 105. Similarly, Tyrtaeus' use of the word *rhetrai* (speeches) was interpreted as a reference to the Spartan legislation called the Great Rhetra.

6. Cf. Parmenides 28 B8.22 DK, Pindar fr. 194.2–3, Orpheus 1B1 DK.

7. Since both Diogenes Laertius and Plutarch say Solon was feigning madness, the Salamis poem may have contained a line like "a little time will show my madness to the citizens" (fr. 14 GPr = 10 W).

8. The fourth-century Daimachus of Plataea (*FGrHist* 65 F 7) did not credit Solon with participation in the hostilities against Megara (Plut., *Comp. Sol. et Publicola*, 4.1); Manfredini and Piccirilli 1977, xxxiii.

9. Cf. the anecdote about Empedocles reported by Aristotle: "Aristotle (fr. 66 Rose) says that [Empedocles] was an independent, hostile to every form of government, and that he in fact turned down the kingship when it was offered to him, as Xanthus says in his work about him (*en tois peri autou*, *FGrHist* 765 F 32), since it was clear that he liked the simple life better" (Diog. Laert. 8.63 = A 1, 1 p. 279 DK). On Xanthus (of Lydia, a contemporary of Herodotus?), see Momigliano 1993, 30–32.

10. Lloyd-Jones 1973b, 125; Lefkowitz 1976a, 29.

11. The use of dialogue anticipates drama; Fränkel 1975, 29.

12. The use of these meters may have some connection with the invention of drama attributed to Thespis, see Else 1965, 60–62, Irwin 2005, 274.

13. Irwin 2005, 151–52, 272.

14. Irwin 2005, 136–37. The correspondence to the scene in the *Odyssey* was noted in antiquity; Aristotle fr. 143 Rose is cited by the scholia to *Il.* 2.183.

15. Irwin 2005, 139–42.

16. Irwin 2005, 145; Irwin 2006, 17–24.

17. On the generic aspects of Hesiod's portrayal of princely behavior, see esp. Martin 1984, 29–48; Martin 1993, 120; and on its influence on Thucydides' portrayal of Pericles, see Szegedy-Maszak 1993, 206.

18. Ostwald 1969, 67–68; Szegedy-Maszak 1993, 204.

19. Irwin 2005, 264–66; Morrison 2007, 52–53.

20. The earliest testimony about inscription of the "Laws of Solon" is Cratinus, *PCG* IV, fr. 300 KA = T 13 Ruschenbusch 1966; Stroud 1979, 3; cf. also Jacoby 1949, 14, Stroud 1979, 40–14.

21. E.g., Draco's law on homicide, Fornara 1977, §15 = Meiggs and Lewis 1969, no. 86; on the *axones* and *kurbeis* in general, Sickinger 1999, 24–33.

22. De Sanctis 1975, 256 n.25; Finley 1975, 39.

23. Cf. Andrewes 1938, 90.

24. Fornara 1977, §88; Ruschenbusch 1966, fr. 1b, 30a.

25. Other law codes were said to have been sung; Thomas 1995, 63, van Wees 1999, 26.

26. Momigliano 1993, 27. The basic notion of a college of seven appears to come from Mesopotamia; Burkert 1993, 114.

27. For a survey of the ancient sources about the Seven Wise Men, see Barkowski 1923, 2243–47; also Martina 1968, T 106; Dem. Phal. fr. 114, with Wehrli's note. Plato, as usual shap-

ing the story to suit his purpose, includes Chilon of Sparta and says all the Wise Men approved and emulated Spartan culture (*Prot.* 343a); Page 1962, 514.

28. *PSI* 1093; Snell 1966, 115–17.

29. Martina 1968, T 179, 880, 186; cf. fr. 29a GPr = 33 W, 7 GPr = 5 W.

30. E.g., Martina 1968, T 165, 167, 174, 199.

31. For a collection of the sayings attributed to the Seven Wise Men, along with other ancient sources, see Snell 1938.

32. Wehrli 1973, 196.

33. Ruschenbusch 1994, 376. Plutarch described his own methods in *Alexander* 1.2: "We are not writing histories (*historias*), but lives (*bious*)," his purpose, like that of a portrait painter, being to delineate character; for other passages where he discusses his aims and methods, see Geiger 1985, 23 n.1; Pelling 2007, 81–82.

34. For a list of the sources cited by Plutarch, see Manfredini and Piccirilli 1977, xix–xxxii.

35. Gerber 1999, 127 n.1; van Wees 1999, 8.

36. Parke and Wormell (1956, 131) date the oracle about Salamis (326) to 300 B.C.

37. On democratic bias in the work of Cleidemus and Theopompus, see Ruschenbusch 1994, 370–73.

38. Finley 1975, 55.

39. Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 202, 208.

40. There are echoes of Odysseus also in Parmenides' mythical journey to visit the goddess Dikē along the resounding road "which carries through every city the man who knows" (fr. 28 B 1 DK); Tarán 1965, 11–12, 22–31; Kirk–Raven–Schofield 1983, 243–44.

41. Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 202, 204.

42. Schol. *Tim.* 20e = Martina 1968, T 62 specifies that the elder Critias' father was Dropides, Solon's *brother.*

43. The lines were used in oratory to exemplify how Critias' family was always disrespectful, T 79 GPr.

44. On the myth of Atlantis, see Brisson 1998, 14; Nesselrath 2002; Vidal-Naquet 2007, 13–33; Lefkowitz 2007, 106.

45. For example, Plutarch provides the names of the priests who spoke with Solon: Psenopis and Sonchis; Vidal-Naquet 2007, 41–42; Lefkowitz 2007, 109–10.

46. Lefkowitz 2007, 106–11.

47. That Soloi was named after Solon is, of course, a folk etymology; if the name really had been derived from Solon's it would have preserved both syllables of his name. Cf. how in myth Orestes travels to Orestheion or Oresthaion in Arcadia (a name almost certainly derived from Orestheus, son of Lycaon of Arcadia), which is given a more plausible spelling, *Oresteion* in Eur., *Orestes* 1645–47, possibly by a later interpolator; see Willink 1986, 104 and West 1987, 292.

48. Gallo 1976, 29–36.

49. See esp. Dougherty 2001, 3–4.

50. Plut., *Vit. Sol.* 27.1: "Thousands have adjusted [the dates] up to the present day without reaching any agreement and cannot resolve the conflicts." Such fluctuation in date is a sign of mythology; Finley 1975, 15–26; Clarke 2008, 1–5.

51. Hignett 1952, 316–21; Martina 1968, 441–42 n.261; Wehrli 1973, 202.

52. A Megarian *Iliad* would have contained fewer references to Athens. In a Megarian parody of *Il.* 2.557–58, Ajax brought his ships from Salamis and four places in Megara, rather than "stationing them near the Athenian forces" (Strabo, *Geogr.* 9.1.10).

53. See esp. Irwin 2006, 24: "Against the wider context of archaic political exploitation of poetry, *pace* Lefkowitz [1981], more of Solon's poetry would not necessarily tell us anything more specific about land tenure in Attica or the nature of the *Boulē*, but it could tell us a lot about political posturing in the archaic period, a historical phenomenon in itself."

54. Finley 1975, 44.

55. Szegedy-Maszak 1978, 200.

56. Kearns 1989, 63; Compton 2006, 127–28.

CHAPTER 5: *Simonides*

1. On traveling poets, see esp. Hunter and Rutherford 2009, 16–19.

2. Dickie 1978, 21–33.

3. Nisetich 1977, 255–64.

4. Wehrli 1973, 199–200. On Plato and Simonides, see Demos 1999, 11–38; McCoy 1999, 349–67; cf. Hutchinson 2001, 291–306; Bowie 2009, 131.

5. Thales was said to have offered the advice "be envied rather than pitied" (1 p. 64 §9 DK); Milobenski 1964, 1–2.

6. Slater 1972, 236.

7. Cf. Slater 1972, 236; cf. Page 1981, 241–43; on problems with determining the date of these epigrams, see Molyneux 1992, 307–37.

8. Simonides' datable works fall within a twenty-five-year period (500–476 B.C.); Molyneux 1992, 341.

9. Page 1981, 242. Cf. the proverbial "Hesiodic old age" and Satyrus' story about how Sophocles responded to his son's criticism that he was senile by producing the *Oedipus at Colonus* (*TrGF* 4 T 1.13 = Satyrus F 4 Schorn).

10. On the use of different letters of the alphabet, see (e.g.) Buck 1933, 71–73. The letters at the end of the Greek alphabet (such as *psi*) were non-Phoenician and hence invented (though certainly long before Simonides); see Woodard 2004, 655–56.

11. This story about Pindar's overuse of *san* is included in a discussion of alphabetic riddles, Ath. x. 453c–455d. The letter *san* was used instead of *sigma* in the Corinthian alphabet; Buck 1933, 70; Woodard 2004, 656. Dionysius of Halicarnassus called the *s* sound "uncivilized" (*Comp.* 14. 80), but Pindar did not avoid it in his poetry; see van der Weiden 1991, 64.

12. See also Bell 1978, 82. Wordplay also occurs in epigrams attributed to Simonides, e.g., *FGE* 776–77, 831–32.

13. Many riddles are discussed in Ath. x. 448b–459b. On riddles in symposia, Bell 1978, 59 n.118; also the riddles attributed to Cleobulina, West 1989, II 50–51; Clearchus fr. 84–85 Wehrli.

14. See also Xenophanes 21 B11, 12, 14 and cf. Heraclitus 22B56–57 DK. Kirk–Raven–Schofield 1983, 168–71; Boardman 1975, 219.

15. Xenophanes' comment about Simonides is cited by the scholia to explain the joke; Olson 1998, 210–11.

16. Slater 1972, 206; Bell 1978, 29; Woodbury 1968, 529; cf. Goldmann 1989, 43–66, cf. esp. 51. On poets and money in general, see Bremer 1991, 39–60; Hunter and Rutherford 2009, 11–14.

17. Bell 1978, 61; Woodbury 1968, 538–42. On how the discussion of money serves as praise of the victor, see esp. Kurke 1991, 240–52.

18. Lefkowitz 1991, 99–100; Bell 1978, 6. Cf. also schol. *Nem.* 7.25a, III p. 120, schol. *Pyth.* 58a, II p. 260 Dr; cf. the story attributed to the second-century B.C. scholar Parmeniscus that Euripides was paid 5 talents (!) by the Corinthians for attributing the murder of the children to Medea rather than to themselves (schol. Eur., *Med.* 9).

19. Bacchylides' references to wealth inspire no anecdotal explanations because he tends to detach himself from them: Hieron will be honored for having "shown the flowers of his wealth to mortals," and the poet will be honored for the beauty of his song (Ode 3.92–98).

20. Slater 1972, 234; Lefkowitz 1991, 98.

21. Milobenski 1964, 4 n.15; Brown 2006, 36–46.

22. Bell 1978, 40; Dunbar 1995, 521, 536–38; Martin 2009, 101.

23. Cf. Bell 1978, 35.

24. See n.4 of this chapter.

25. Other expressions of traditional piety in Simonides' poetry are *PMG* 526, 581.5.

26. On the use of mnemonics in this story, Marchesi 2005, 394–96.

27. Cf. Ibycus' cranes and the story of how Simonides was saved by the ghost of a man he buried, who warned him not to go on a voyage. The story provides an etiology for two epigrams attributed to Simonides, *FGE* 1026–27 and 1028–39.

28. Slater 1972, 238; Kurke 1991, 59–61.

29. See esp. Pfeiffer 1949–53 on Callim. fr. 222; Page 1962, 242–44 on *PMG* 510.

30. Wehrli 1973, 202–3.

31. Cf. Cic., *Nat.D.* 1.22.

32. Aristotle also refers to Simonides' "Tall Tales," *PMG* 653.

33. Cf. collections of advice in mythological settings, such as the *Sayings of Admetus, PMG* 749; *Chiron's Precepts,* Hes. fr. 283–85 M–W; Wehrli 1973, 195 n.12, 197–98.

34. Austin 1967, 11–12.

35. Bell 1978, 41, 63–66.

36. Cf. how in Carm. 2.20.1–5 Horace escapes from envy (*invidia*) by metamorphosis into a bird, as in Satyrus' interpretation (F 6 39.xvii Schorn) of Euripides' lines (*TrGF* 5.2, F 911); see Nisbet–Hubbard 1978, 334.

37. Wehrli 1973, 203–4.

38. On Simonides' poem about Salamis, see esp. Rutherford 2001, 37–38; Boedeker and Sider 2001, 120–34. On Ephorus' use of Simonides, Flower 1998 369, 378; Clarke 2008, 102–3.

39. On the authenticity of epigrams attributed to Simonides, see Gow–Page 1965, II 516, with five Hellenistic epigrams; for others, see Page 1981, 186–302.

40. On additions to the Theognidean Corpus, West 1989, I 172–74; cf. also Menander's *Maxims,* by various poets, Lesky 1966b, 646.

CHAPTER 6: *Pindar*

1. For a translation of the Ambrosian *Vita*, see Appendix 2; and on the biographers' methodology, see Lefkowitz 1991, 90–96.

2. Text of the second- or third-century biography in Gallo 1968, 49–52.

3. Fairweather 1974, 256–59. Cf. the story about Simonides competing with Lasus, Ar., *Vesp.* 1410–11.

4. Lehnus 1977, 78–82.

5. Because of its improbability, the metaphor of a honeycomb in the mouth became a standard portent of poetic talent, as in the epigram about Pindar by Antipater of Thessalonica (487–90 *GP* = *Anth. Plan.* 305). Honeycombs were said to have been built in the mouths of Menander (1238–39 *FGE* = *AP* 9.187), Lucan (*Vit. Vaccae*, p. 335 Hosius), and Virgil (*Vit. Focae* 28–30). On the bronze statue of Homer in the gymnasium in Byzantium erected during the reign of Septimius Severus (A.D. 145–211), a bee was shown placing a honeycomb on the poet's mouth (*AP* 2.342–43). Bees laid Hymettus honey on the baby Plato's lips (Olympiodorus, *In Alc.* 2.24–29 and *Anon. Proleg.* 2.16–22); see also Riginos 1976, §3; cf. Lefkowitz 1991, 91; Bell 1978, 513 n.116; Kambylis 1965, 94–103.

6. Simonides was called Melicertes because of his sweetness (*Suda*, Sigma 439). Pindar speaks of his song as being "like a bee (*melissa*) rushing from story to story" (*Pyth.* 10.45), and in *Nem.* 11.18 he appears deliberately to associate *melos* ("song") with *meli* ("honey"); Haldane 1968, 26. In Hellenistic epigrams his song (*melos*) is said to sound like a bee's (Antipater Sid., *Anth. Pal.* 7.34 = 284–85 *HE*), see Gow–Page 1965, II 48.

7. Tzetzes preserves the content of Proclus' *Vita*; see chapter on Hesiod.

8. See also Lefkowitz 1991, 91.

9. The story about Pan was known in the first century A.D.; Antipater Thess. 491–92 *GP* = *Anth. Plan.* 305. On variations of the story, see Haldane 1968, 40. Lehnus 1979, 57–68. Borgeaud 1998, 260, n.6..

10. See Lehnus 1979, 127, and for testimonia, 57–58. On the difficulties of interpreting the testimonia, see Slater 1971, 141–52.

11. See Nilsson 1967, I 726 and 726 n.8; Borgeaud 2004, 138 n.37. Cybele is also mentioned in Pindar fr. 80.

12. Lehnus 1979, 1–55.

13. In later times there is evidence for a cult of Demeter as *meter theon*; see esp. Arrigoni 1982, 30–35. The term *meter theon* was applied to Gē and Rhea (see Munn 2006, 56–57). Syncretism cannot be ruled out; see Lidov 1996, 142–44.

14. Herodotus mentions cults of Demeter *thesmophoros* in Paros (6.91.2) and Aegina (6.134.2).

15. Arrigoni 1982, 30, 58 n.126.

16. On Aristodemus, commentator on Homer, Pindar, Euripides, Theocritus, and Apollonius, see *FGrHist* 383 F 1, IIIb 173–74. According to Strabo (14.1.48), this Aristodemus was a cousin of Aristodemus of Nysa, who argued that Homer was a Roman.

17. Lehnus 1979, 55, 28 n.93; Lefkowitz 1991, 51–53. On the possibility of an epiphany, see Gronewald 1974, 114–16; Dover 1978, 174. Cf. Sappho's special relationship with Aphrodite (e.g., fr. 1, 2 V); a third-century biography gives special emphasis to her relationship with

the goddess: "She was in such high favor with the citizens that Callias of Mytilene said in . . . Aphrodi[te]" (*SLG* 261A.7–11).

18. For example, when Pindar in *Pythian* 8 says that on his way to Delphi he met the hero Alcmeon, the ancient commentators proposed instead that the chorus was speaking about a local shrine of that hero in Aegina, or that the poet was referring to the hero cult in Thebes of Alcmeon's father Amphiaraus (schol. *Pyth.* 8.78ab); Lefkowitz 1991, 81–83, 86–88; Lehnus 1979, 37; Page 1955, 40–41.

19. Similarly, Aristodemus imagined that Pindar apologized not just to the victor or his father but to all the citizens of Aegina when, in *Nemean Ode* 7, the poet states that he did not savage Neoptolemus with ruthless words (schol. *Nem.* 7.150a).

20. Frazer 1898, V 97 compares how Mozart composed his *Requiem* under the impression that his death was imminent; the score was completed by his friend Süssmayer.

21. In his *Vita* of Pindar, Thomas Magister (1282–1328) relates the story about Pindar's house and observes that the same story was also told about Alexander the Great (*Vit. Thom.* p. 5.11–16 Dr); see also the metrical *Vita*, 13–15 (p. 9.8–5 Dr).

22. On the ritual of the *theoxenia* at Delphi see Nagy 1999, 124 n.9.

23. Herodotus says that by rewarding Cleobis and Biton with a peaceful death, "the god indicated that the best thing for a human being was to die rather than to live" (1.31.1). Silenus was said to have given the same advice to Theognis (Aristotle, fr. 44 Rose); Alcidamas in his *Mouseion* had Hesiod ask the question of Homer (Stobaeus 4.52b.22), who replies with a version of the lines we also know as *Theognis* 425–28. The advice is also given by the chorus in Soph., *OC* 1225–39; see Easterling 2009, 161–70.

24. Fr. 98a.1 refers to Sappho's mother without a name.

25. Calame 1977, II 32. Cf. Pind., fr. 94b.66–76.

26. In the Thoman *Vita* (p. 4.11 Dr) Pindar's mother is Myrto; cf. Myrtis, said to be Pindar's teacher (*Suda*, Pi 1617).

27. Lefkowitz 1991, 92.

28. Cf. the names given to Hesiod's murderers by Alcidamas (Amphiphanes and Ganyctor, sons of Phegeus) and Eratosthenes (Ctimenus and Antiphus, sons of Ganyctor).

29. Eustathius supposed that Pindar had been in Argos celebrating a victory (*Prologue* to a selection of Pindar's poetry, 25). The epigram (*Anth. Pal.* 7. 35) may originally have been included in a series of epigrams on famous poets, such as those by the Hellenistic poet Lobon of Argos (*Supp.Hell.* 504–26); see Gabathuler 1937, 77–79. On other possible authors of *Anth. Pal.* 7.35, see Wilamowitz 1922, 447–48; Gow–Page 1965, II 395. Rose 1931, 121–22 dates the epigram to the late third century.

30. Lefkowitz 1991, 75–81.

31. Lefkowitz 1991, 96–104, Podlecki 1979, 13–14. On the intended meaning of the *Isthm.* 2 passage, Kurke 1991, 239–52.

32. Other teacher-student relationships were inferred from references in Sappho's poems. The idea that "Anagora" and Gongula were Sappho's pupils (*Suda* Sigma 107 = fr. 253 Voigt) derives from a reference to Anactoria (16.15) and Gongula (95.4). Sappho's own poetry may be the source of the seemingly independent information in an ancient commentary that she educated the noblest girls in Ionia (*SLG* 261A.7–11).. Cf. how Anacreon, who mentions a girl from Lesbos in a poem (*PMG* 358), was said to be Sappho's lover (fr. 219 = Chamaeleon fr. 26 Wehrli).

33. Bundy 1962, 16, esp. n.21. Aristarchus thought the priamel in *Isthm.* 7 was a criticism of the Spartans, schol. *Isthm.* 7.23a; a commentator thought the proem of *Olympian Ode* 1 was intended as a warning to Hieron (schol. *Ol.* 1.1b).

34. The scholia on this passage (*Ol.* 6. 148a) identify Aeneas as the trainer of the chorus (*chorodidaskalos*), but this information also may derive from conjecture; see Lefkowitz 1991, 182–83.

35. Although scholars have argued that Corinna wrote during the Hellenistic era (e.g., Clayman 1993, 633–42), a statue of her attributed to the sculptor Silanion suggests a *terminus ante quem* of the last quarter of the fourth century; see Stewart 1998, 278–81. Schachter 2005 suggests that she wrote during the first half of the fourth century, during the high point of Boeotian power. My thanks to Lucia Prauscello for these references.

36. Cf Timaeus *FGrHist* 566 F 93. In Diod. Sic. 11.48.7, Hieron himself is the peacemaker; Podlecki 1979, 8–9.

37. Bundy 1962, 133; cf. schol. *Ol.* 10.1b.

38. See Lefkowitz 1991, 137–38, 141–42.

39. Cf. schol. *Nem.* 3.45c: "He sees he is digressing"; also schol. *Pyth.* 11.58b.

40. Cf. Lefkowitz 1991, 93–94.

41. The apothegms were included in Eustathius' biography and are listed separately by Drachmann 1964, 3–4.

42. Lefkowitz 1991, 127–46.

43. Pindar appears to use the same metaphor in fr. 6b f.

44. Callimachus knew and imitated phrases from Pindar's poetry (e.g., fr. 480, 597, 384). Pfeiffer 1949–53 on fr. 383.1; Parsons 1977, 45–46.

45. The site may have been identified later on the basis of its proximity to the sanctuary of Dindymene. On the possible location of Pindar's house, see Symeonoglou 1985, 140–41; but cf. Xagorari-Gleissner 2008, 125. I am grateful to Giampiera Arrigoni for these references and her discussion of these issues.

46. The "garden of Zeus" in *Pyth.* 9.53 (for Telesicrates of Cyrene) is connected in the scholia (*Pyth.* 9.90bc) with the cult of Zeus Ammon, which Pindar mentions in *Pyth.* 4.16 (for Arcesilas of Cyrene); Farnell 1932, II 152–53. If the cult of Ammon at Thebes actually dates back to the second quarter of the fifth century, it would have been the earliest cult of Ammon in mainland Greece. There is inscriptional evidence for a cult of Ammon in Athens in 331/330; Nilsson 1967, I 832.

CHAPTER 7: *Aeschylus*

1. Satyrus F 6 fr. 39 IX 25–28 Schorn = fr. 694 KA, *PCG* 3.2, p. 356. Compare Satyrus F and Ar., *Thesm.* 149–50, where the poet Agathon insists that poets ought to adapt their habits to what they write about in their poetry.

2. Cf. Dioscorides 1593–94 *HE* = *TrGF* 3, T 163.3–4. "[Aeschylus] carved letters not chiseled but as washed out by rain torrents;" Gabathuler 1937, 84; Gow–Page 1965, II 253.

3. On Pausanias 1.21.2–3, see esp. Musti 1982, 336. Pausanias thought that Aeschylus himself wrote a poem about the god's epiphany, but it is possible that the poem was attributed to him by a later writer who was inspired by something he had written, as in the case of the

epigram about Archilochus abandoning his shield (fr. 5W = *FGE* 532–35). The young Pindar also is said to have been asleep when bees built a honeycomb in his mouth, a sign that he was to be a poet (*Vit. Amb.* 3).

4. For translation, see Appendix 3.

5. Davies 1971, 6–8.

6. Cf. how Sappho's mother acquires the name of Sappho's daughter (?) Cleis. Inconsistency suggests that the name of Aeschylus' second son (Euaion, Eubion, Bion) was invented, like the names given to members of Hesiod's and Pindar's families.

7. See also Compton 2006, 131. Pausanias mentions the painting of the battle of Marathon in the Stoa Poikile in Athens in connection with a statue of Aeschylus in the theater of Dionysus (1.21.2 = *TrGF* 3, T 148 = *TrGF* 4, T 161).

8. For a list of the many comedies in which drama was parodied, see Dover 1993, 25–27.

9. Aeschylus is compared favorably with his predecessors also by Dioscorides, 1595–96 *HE* = *TrGF* 3, T 163.5–6.

10. On silent figures in Aeschylus, see esp. Taplin 1972, 58–64.

11. On later misinterpretations of the phrase *ant' agorēs*, see the chapter on Solon.

12. On Ion, see Fairweather 1974, 243; Pelling 2007, 72–88.

13. Petrovic 2009, 195–216 and (on Aeschylus) 203–4.

14. It also seems that the citizens of Thebes are onstage at the beginning of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and Hecuba comes onstage during the prologue of Euripides' *Hecuba* (52–53); see Taplin 1977, 134–36, although he argues (369–74) for the Erinyes' entrance at *Eumenides* 140.

15. *Telegony*, fr. 4 Bernabé = West 2003b, fr. 5.

16. On Tiresias' prophecy, see Fairweather 1974, 271; Hartmann 1917, 108; Hadjicosti 2005, 78–82.

17. Compton 2006, 133; Lefkowitz 2009, 390–91.

18. On the connection between lyres and poets, see Chitwood 2004, 49.

19. Lloyd-Jones 1990a, 243–49.

20. See also Clay 2004, 127; on the reasons why the epigram cannot have been written by Aeschylus himself, see Page 1981, 131–32.

21. Taplin 1977, 44–46, 438; Lloyd-Jones 1966, 19.

22. Taplin 1977, 393 n.2; on "ghosts" (*eidola*), Bardel 2000, 154–58.

23. See esp. Glucker 1969, 56–77; Glucker 2000, 29–30. On the need for a third actor in Aeschylus' *Seven against Thebes*, Taplin 1977, 185–86.

24. On the lack of information, see Glucker 1969, 71–73.

CHAPTER 8: *Sophocles*

1. For a translation of *The Life of Sophocles* see Appendix 4.

2. Why would Ister have thought that Sophocles was born in Phlius? The satyr plays, on which tragedy was thought to have been based, were invented by Pratinas of Phlius; cf. Dioscorides 1599–1600 *HE* (= *TrGF* 4, T 179), Gow–Page 1965, II 254. Did Ister misunderstand his source, or was the information based on comedy, like the idea that Aristophanes came from Rhodes or even Egypt? See the chapter on comic poets.

3. Athenaeus makes it clear that the comic poets are the source of much of his "credible information" (*pistis*) about the tragic poets (i.21f = Ar., fr. 696 KA, *PCG* IIIA, pp. 357–58).

4. Claiming that Sophocles' father was a craftsman or Euripides' mother was a vegetable-seller would only be funny if his parents were in fact well-born; apparently no one made fun of Socrates, whose mother, Phaenarete, was a midwife (*Theaet.* 149a; Herodicus quoted in Ath. v.219b).

5. See also Harding 1994, 147.

6. Bell 1978, 62. Poets speak of "leading" choral song, as in Archilochus' verses "I know how to lead (*exarxai*) a beautiful song to Lord Dionysus, a dithyramb" (fr. 120 W). The idea that the poet himself led the chorus is inherent in Aristotle's derivation of tragedy from "those who led dithyrambs" (*Poet.* 1449a11).

7. Later in the fifth century, the Athenian state chose three protagonists, who were then allocated to the poets by lot (*Suda* Nu 170); Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 93.

8. On Thamyris, the bard who competed with the Muses (*Il.* 2.594–60), see the chapter on Homer; cf. *TrGF* 4, T 99b. According to Athenaeus, Sophocles played the lyre in *Thamyris* (i.20e = *TGrF* 4, T 28) and played ball in the now-lost drama *Nausicaa* (*TrGF* 4, T 28, cf. T 29–30).

9. Fairweather 1974, 252–53, suggests that the identification of the lyre player as Sophocles may have been "a piece of impressive bluffing on the part of an imaginative gallery guide."

10. Euripides, Simon, and Amphitheos were all members of Aristophanes' *thiasos* (*IG* II^2 3.2343) and the objects of jokes in his comedies; see chapter on Euripides.

11. Dover 1980, 10.

12. Some passages in Sophocles' surviving dramas have close analogies in the *Histories* (e.g., esp. *Ant.* 904–12/Hdt. 3.119.6 and *OC* 337–41/Hdt. 2.35.2; How & Wells 1912, 7). But in its generalizing tendencies Sophocles' style of writing appears to have more in common with that of Thucydides; see Hornblower 2004, 286.

13. On the interpretation of these lines from the *Frogs*, see esp. Dover 1993, 288–89. Cf. Ar., *Pax* 696 = *TrGF* 4, T 104a.

14. Woodbury 1970, 214–15; Friis Johansen 1962, 110.

15. Lefkowitz 1991, 111–12. Cf. the story that the poets Menander and Philemon were invited to Alexandria by Ptolemy Soter (367/6–282 B.C.), discussed in the chapter on comic poets.

16. One of the scholia on the line explains that both Sophocles and Simonides were guilty of "loving money" and that Sophocles had "made money out of his generalship in Samos" (*TrGF* 4, T 104c). Another scholion denies the story (*TrGF* 4, T 104d); charges of corruption were made routinely in comedy against important public figures, and Aristophanes did not hesitate to make fun even of members of his *thiasos* for "impiety" and sexual misconduct.

17. Cf. the story provided by Hieronymus (fr. 35 Wehrli) as a background explanation for an epigram addressed to Euripides about how Sophocles lost his cloak (= *TrGF* 4, T 75 = Ath. xiii. 604d–e); the epigram is attributed to Sophocles (fr. 4 West = *FGE* 1040–43), but its style and content seem Hellenistic. See also West 1974, 20–21. Cf. the anecdotes about Euripides' womanizing (*Ran.* 1046–47; *TrGF* 5.1, T 106a = Hermesianax 7.63–64 Powell) discussed in the chapter on Euripides.

18. Friis Johanssen 1962, 110.

19. Cf. the anecdotes generated by misunderstanding of the word *mnēmē* in the epigram "No one's memory compares with Simonides' at eighty" (fr. 14 W = *EG* 180A–180B), discussed in the chapter on Simonides.

20. On the origin of this anecdote in comedy, see Jebb 1900, xxxix–xlii, and esp. the discussion in Schorn 2004, 172–77. An anecdote in Aristotle might derive from the same source: "Sophocles said that he was trembling not as his accuser said, so as to seem old, but because he could not help it; he did not want to be eighty years old" (*Rhet.* 1416a15 = *TrGF* 4, T 165); Lefkowitz 1987, 160–61. On how comedy is reported as history in the Euripides' *Vita*, where the women of Athens are said to have threatened the poet (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IV.2).

21. On the evidence for the date of the *Antigone*, see Woodbury 1970, 210–24; Griffith 1999, 1–2. Dioscorides, in his epigram about Sophocles, names either *Antigone* or *Electra* as his "top" choices (*TrGF* 4, T 179 = 1605–6 *HE*), but Aristotle repeatedly cites the *Oedipus Tyrannus* to illustrate effective plot construction.(e.g., *Poet.* 1453a, 29–33).

22. Cf. Woodbury 1970, 223.

23. A man named Creon served with Sophocles as one of the ten generals in 441/0, Androtion *FGrHist* 324 F 38; Harding 1994, 147. But cf. Woodbury 1970, 209–24, and on the war, Hammond 1959, 314–16.

24. On Herodotus seeing in the fall of Persia a model for imperialistic Athens, Fornara 1971, 89–91; Romm 1998, 52–53, but as Gould observes (1989, 116–20), the historian's primary intention was to make his audience reflect on the tragic nature of human experience.

25. Cf. Woodbury 1970, 213 n.24.

26. *Kēlēdones* were similar in appearance and function to Sirens (Ath. vii.290e); Weicker 1902, 83 n.1. Sirens were portrayed on grave monuments because they sang the music of the underworld (*TrGF* 4, fr. 861; Eur., *Hel.* 167–69, with Kannicht 1969, II 67); Buschor 1944, 59–60.

27. Gabathuler 1937, 77–78.

28. "Dexion" understood as "receiver" expresses the kindly aspect of the dead hero, as in the name of the heroes Hypodectes (*IG* II 1061) and Dexamenos; in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus,* Oedipus wants to be buried at Colonus, near Athens, so that as a hero he can "bring gain to the house of those who have *received* me (*tois dedegmenois*) and destruction to those who sent me away" (92–93). The verb *dechomai* can also denote divine protection (e.g., Pind., *Pyth.* 8.5 19; 9.73).

29. My suggestion that the association of Dexion with Sophocles was a later invention was doubted by Kearns 1989, 154, but see now the detailed analysis by Connolly 1998, 1–21; additional bibliography in Parker 1996, 185 and Allan 2004, 137–38.

30. Connolly 1998, 5–6.

31. For texts and translations, see also Clay 2004, 151–53.

32. Change of name signifies a change from child to adult, Brelich 1958, 128; when in myth Melicertes becomes a god he acquires the name Palaemon; schol. Pind., *Isthm.* hypoth., III p. 192.

33. A fragment of the text of Sophocles' paean to Asclepius is preserved in a third-century A.D. inscription; see Furley and Bremer 2001, II 219–21. On the possible locations of the Asclepius sanctuary, see Clay 2004, 78–79.

34. According to the *Vita*, Sophocles wrote 113 dramas (Radt *TrGF* 4, T 1.18 = Ar. Byz., fr. 385 Slater), or 123 according to his *Suda* biography (T 2); it is impossible to know which of the two totals is correct, since some plays were known by more than one title and thus may have been counted more than once. *On didaskaliai*, see Griffith 1977, 228–29; Sickinger 1999, 41–47.

35. The association of poetry and honey was conventional (e.g, Pindar, *Pyth*, 10.54). Aristophanes had said of Phrynichus (the tragic poet), "like a bee he sucked the fruit of melodies immortal, ever carrying away sweet song" (*Av.* 748–50); for bees building honeycombs in poets' mouths, see the chapter on Pindar, and in general Waszink 1973.

CHAPTER 9: *Euripides*

1. For a translation of the Euripides *Vita*, see Appendix 5; also Kovacs 1994, 2–11. On the *Vita* see esp. Arrighetti 1964, Kumaniecki 1929, Leo 1912, Delcourt 1933, and now esp. Schorn 2004, 27–31. Ippolito (1999) has assembled all passages in Euripides and in comedy which might conceivably have had some bearing on the composition of the *Vita*.

2. All references to Satyrus in this chapter are based on the text in Schorn 2004.

3. Criticism of social background is a standard mode of invective; Nisbet 1961, 194. Aristophanes made fun of friend and foe alike. Euripides was a member of Aristophanes' *thiasos* (*IG* II^2 3.2343). Other members included Simon, portrayed in *Nub.* 351 as a harpy and in 399 as a perjurer, and Amphitheos, who is made to boast, in *Ach.* 46, that he is immortal, descended from Demeter. See Dow 1969; Gelzer 1970, 1398; Henderson 1998, 3.

4. Roselli 2005, 7–9.

5. Riginos 1976, §§12–14. Calder 1974, 274.

6. The lines from the *Danae* are not cited in the fragment, but for the idea, see *TrGF* 5.1, F 325, "no man is stronger than money, except for one, whoever he is, I do not see."

7. By putting these words into the mouth of Hecuba, Euripides was almost certainly criticizing Anaxagoras' views; see Lefkowitz 2003b, 106–8; Schorn 2004, 214–15. There is also a reference to Anaxagoras in Satyrus F 6 fr. 37i.

8. The line is also attributed to Menander, *Monostich*, 588 Jaekel.

9. Diogenes also cites Timon's malicious *Silloi*: "They say that Anaxagoras was the mighty hero Mind" (fr. 798 *Suppl.Hell.*).

10. When Hippolytus learns about Phaedra's passion for him and cries out, "mother earth and open expanse of the sun" (*Hipp.* 601), an ancient commentator added a reference to Anaxagoras' term for the sun, *mydros*. But characters in distress often call on the elements; Barrett 1964, 272; Griffith 1978, 133 n.77. According to Diogenes Laertius, Anaxagoras predicted the fall of a meteorite and said it came from the sun, "for which reason Euripides, who was a pupil of Anaxagoras, calls the sun itself a golden clod in the *Phaethon* " (*bōlos*, Diog. Laert. 2.10 = *TrGF* 5.2, F 783 = Phaethon fr. 5 Diggle); Arrighetti 1964 , 105–7; Diggle 1970, 178. Lefkowitz 1987, 54–56. On collections of Euripides' sayings, see Dihle 1977, 32. For a modern collection of passages that could be thought to reflect the influence of Anaxagoras, Prodicus, and Protagoras, see Ippolito 1999, 43–58. On claims of influence in the biographies, see esp. Fairweather 1974, 262–63.

11. Cf. Dale 1954, 120–21, "a naive reaction to the prominent initial *egō*." The word *metar-*

sios by the Hellenistic period was equivalent to *meteoros*; Dover 1976, 39, e.g., Plut., *Per.* 32.2.

12. Socrates adds "firewood" (*phrygana*), while Euripides cooks up a new play called *Phrygians*. We have no evidence that Euripides ever wrote a play of that title, although both Aeschylus (*TrGF* 3, F 263) and Sophocles (*TrGF* 4, F 724) did so.

13. Diogenes (2.18) also cites another contemporary comic poet, Callias, remarking on a female character's pomposity (*semnōtēs*), for which Socrates "is responsible" (fr. 15 KA, *PCG* IV, 46); he calls Socrates himself *semnos* in Diog. Laert. 2.24; Arrighetti 1964, 113.

14. Whitehead 1986, 184–85, e.g., nos. 56–57 (p. 381). Sophocles, according to his biographer, led the chorus that sang the paean at the sacrifice after the Athenian victory at Salamis (*TrGF* 4, T 1.4).

15. Remarkable coincidence in itself does not necessarily constitute disproof. The second and third presidents of the United States, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, both died on 4 July 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

16. E.g., the *stēlē* in Athens designating certain Selembryani as *proxenoi* of the Athenians, *IG* I^2 116 (409/8 B.C.). In the same way Macedonian court historians could have had access to the decree of Philip's *proxenia* for Aristotle; cf. Düring 1957, 235.

17. Schol., Pind. *Nem.* 7.95b, III 129–30 Dr; *Ol.* 9.123c, I 296; Lloyd-Jones 1973b, 135. The poet Apollonius was said to have been awarded *proxenia* by Rhodes, as a means of explaining his epithet "Rhodian"; see chapter on Hellenistic poets.

18. See Page 1981, 307.

19. Amphiaraus and Themistocles both had two tombs; Farnell 1921, 58–61. Themistocles was buried where he died, in Magnesia (*Anth. Pal.* 7.74) but also had a tomb at Athens (Plut., *Them.* 32). Euripides' cenotaph was still standing in the second century A.D. (Paus. 1.2.2); Page 1981, 307; Clay 2004, 134–35.

20. Nestle 1898, 145–49; Vitruv., *De arch.* 8.16; Plin., *NH* 31.28. Cf. the rivers of pleasure and grief on the continent that surrounds the known world, Theopompus *FGrHist* 115 F 75c = Ael. *VH* 3.18. The presence of two springs also at Trophonius' shrine (Paus. 9.39.4) suggests that at Euripides' tomb they mark the ambivalence of a hero's power, not, as Nestle 1898 suggested (p. 149), the "double nature" of Euripides' poetry.

21. It is quite possible that tombs in both places were identified by the locals as belonging to Euripides; see Scullion 2003, 398.

22. See Eur., *Bacch.* 10–11, with Dodds 1960, 62–63; see also Eur., Suppl. 934–36, with Collard 1975, II 341.

23. Archelaus used Anaxagorean words like *nous*, *aer*, and *mydros* in his discourses on physics (60 A 11, 12, 15, 17 DK). According to his contemporary Ion of Chios, Archelaus was a friend of the young Socrates and went with him to Samos (*FrGHist* 392 F 9), but Plato has Socrates say that he never left Athens except when he was serving in the army (*Crit.* 52b). Ion's *Visits* should not be regarded as historical transcripts but as ethical and anecdotal, like the dialogues of Plato; Dover 1986, 33–34. According to Aristoxenus (fr. 52a Wehrli = Diog. Laert. 2. 19, fr. 52b = *Suda*, S 829: I iv 403 Adler), Socrates was Archelaus' boyfriend (60 A 3 DK); but in biography, influence can be represented as eroticism, especially for purposes of slander.

24. See esp. Lefkowitz 1987, 149–66; Schorn (2004), 334–35.

25. Diogenes (9.55) reports, "Philochorus [*FGrHist* 328 F 217] says that when Protagoras [80 A 2 DK] was sailing to Sicily, his ship sank, and that Euripides hints at this in the *Ixion*" (*TrGF* 5.1, [33]a, p. 456); "hints at" (*ainittesthai*) indicates that there was no explicit reference to Protagoras in Euripides' text. On the connection of shipwreck with impiety, see Eur., *El.* 1355, *HF* 1225; Antiphon 5.82, cf. Edwards and Usher 1985, 117.

26. Dover 1976, 41–42; Willink 1986, 25–28.

27. As an ancient commentator on *Hipp.* 612 observes, Euripides' first accuser was not Hygiaenon but Aristophanes: "Aristophanes, taking a general view, says that Euripides committed *hybris*." See also Dover 1993, 16. For more examples of how anecdotes were created from famous lines, see Dover 1993, 16–17; Lefkowitz 2007, 101–4.

28. Dover 1976, 32. In addition to the trial of Sophocles for senility (other trials that may have been based on comedy include the prosecution of Aeschlyus for revealing the Mysteries (170 Wehrli = *TrGF* 3, T 93b), Cleon's prosecution of Euripides (Satyrus F 6 fr. 39x), and Anaxagoras (Sotion fr. 3 Wehrli); see Lefkowitz 1987, 157, 159–60. The story that the fourth-century comic poet Hermippus (T 2 KA, *PCG* V, 561) charged Aspasia with impiety (Plut., *Per.* 32.1) appears simply to replicate the plot of a comedy about her. The story of Cleon's prosecution of Aristophanes for usurping citizens' rights (Ar. *Vit.* T 1 19 KA, *PCG* III.2, 2) was inspired by the plot of the *Babylonians* (T v KA, *PCG* III.2, 62–64); see chapter on comic poets. Dover 1976, 29; Jacoby 1959, 32 n.19; Schwarze 1971, 110–13.

29. The third-century B.C. biographer Neanthes of Cyzicus (Diog. Laert. 9.4 = *FGrHist* 84 F 25) may have deduced from Heraclitus' own words (22 B 97, I 173 DK) that Heraclitus was devoured by dogs; see Fairweather 1973, 238; Chitwood 2004, 88–90; Schorn 2007, 145–46. Lucian's remarks about being torn apart by Cynics (*kynikoi*) inspired the story that he was torn apart by dogs (*kynes*) because he blasphemed against Christians and Christ (*Suda*, Lambda 683); Lefkowitz 1987, 162. In the *Vita* the phrase "the comic poets tore him to pieces" (*diasyrontes*, *TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IB.3) retains the metaphor (cf. Sophocles, *TrGF* 4, F 767).

30. Spartan boys sacrifice a puppy to Enyalius, and Colophonians sacrifice a black female puppy to Hecate, according to Pausanias, 3.24.9. Clement of Alexandria records that the Carians sacrificed dogs to Ares (*Protrept.* 2.29.4); Frazer 1898, III 336. The Thracians also ate dogs, according to Sextus Empiricus, *Pyrr. Hypotyp.* 3.225. On the evidence for dog-eating in general, see esp. Mainoldi 1981, 31; Roy 2007, 242–53.

31. Schorn 2004, 341.

32. E.g., *IT* 392–420, *Hel.* 1451–64; Barlow 1971, 26–27; Padel 1974, 240.

33. E.g., Aesch., *Eum.* 550–57, *Sept.* 158–76; Soph., *Ant.* 586–92; Easterling 1978, 145.

34. A potsherd with a second- or third-century A.D. inscription "*Euripp-*" was found there, along with votive offerings and valuables, which suggest that it was the site of a hero cult, though the connection with Euripides may be secondary; see Blackman 1997–98, 16–17.

35. Aulus Gellius, *NA* 15.20. 4 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 2. Ippolito 1999, 12–13 suggests that Euripides' family may have owned property in Salamis, but why would the poet have found it convenient to work in a dark cave?

36. Nisbet 1961, 195–96.

37. Cf. Lesky 1966b, 199; Leo 1960, 377; Arrighetti 1964, 126. On the process of misinterpretation see Dover 1976, 42–43 = 1988, 144–45.

38. Aulus Gellius attributed the lines about its being difficult to talk to Euripides to the Hellenistic poet Alexander of Aetolia (fr. 7 Powell = *TrGF* 5.1, T 2, 8); the quotation contains lines mentioned a little later in this section of the *Vita* (III.5) about Euripides' bad breath. The attribution may be wrong; anapests are characteristic of comedy and may have originated with Aristophanes. See Lloyd-Jones 1994, 371–79, with discussion by Magnelli 1999, 223–27.

39. On the technique of using verses to "verify" a story, see Leo 1960, 377.

40. According to a scholion on *Tro*. 1057 (vol. 2, p. 370 Schwartz) Euripides' own "hatred" of women emerges in Menelaus' quip that it will not be easy to make all women chaste (cf. Homer, *Od*. 24. 201–2). Euripides appears as an adulterer in Hermesianax, fr. 7.61–68 Powell (*TrGF* 5.1, T 106A).

41. See also Bollansée on *FGrHist* 1026 F 84, IVA, 557–62.

42. On the lines attributed to Alexander of Aetolia, see n. 38.

43. On the difference between Satyrus and the *Vita* on the treatment of this episode, see Delcourt 1933, 286–87. For another example of malice increasing in a later version of a story compare how, in a third-century dialogue biography of Socrates, Xanthippe is shown to be a concerned hostess (*P.Hib.* II 182, p. 27); but the scene emerges in Diogenes Laertius 2.34 as an anecdote critical of Xanthippe. In the papyrus biography, Socrates speaks of agreeable and disagreeable dinner guests; in Diogenes they are "reasonable" and "worthless." In some cases lack of factual information contributes to the process of deterioration; Aubrey's notes on Shakespeare (whom he did not know) are malicious, his life of Milton (whose third wife gave him specific information) respectful; Dick 1972, 360, 437.

44. Audiences apparently enjoyed such jokes about collaboration. In *Thesm*. 1059–61 (*TrGF* 5.1, F [10] iib) Aristophanes accuses Euripides of plagiarizing from himself! There is also Cratinus' notion of *euripidaristophanizōn* (fr. 342 KA, *PCG* 4, 288); cf. schol. Pl., *Apol.* 19C, and Teleclides (fr. 41 KA, *PCG* 7, 683), cited earlier in the *Vita* (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1.IA) in connection with Euripides' collaboration with Mnesilochus and Socrates.

45. Cf. Lesky 1966b, 199; Leo 1960, 376 n.1; Arrighetti 1964, 126.

46. On the possibility that Stesichorus' palinode (*PMGF* 192) may be another recantation based on creative interpretation of an author's poetry, see the chapter "Eight Archaic Poets"; Arrighetti 1964, 126–27. Cf. also the story of Chaucer's repentance at the time of his death, which may be based on his retraction at the end of *The Canterbury Tales;* Crow and Olson 1966, 547; also perhaps the idea that the writer of the novel *Aethiopica* later became Heliodorus bishop of Trikka; Perry 1967, 107–8.

47. The story that Cephisophon and Euripides exchanged wives sounds like the plot of a comedy; Delcourt 1933, 278–79.

48. Leo 1960, 376; Arrighetti 1964, 126–27.

49. Cf. Callimachus, Epig. 23 Pf., about Cleombrotus killing himself because he had read Plato's description of life after death in the *Phaedo.* Cicero, for one, took the joke literally; Riginos 1976, §132. "If the dead have feeling" is an oratorical commonplace, Dover 1974, 243, as in the anecdote, based on Plato's account of Socrates' defence (*Apol.* 41a), that the dying poet Cercidas looked forward to meeting his favorite authors in Hades (Ael., *VH* 13.20), quoted in Powell 1925, 202.

50. Lefkowitz 1976a, 33.

51. Compton 2006, 135–42. On hero cults of poets, see esp. Clay 2004, 63–64, 78–80; Connolly 1998, 1–21.

52. Philochorus' interest in the chronology of Euripides' death (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IA 10) may also derive from concern about the use of poetry as evidence (*FGrHist* 328 F 220; with note in II B, p. 587). He argued that Euripides had died before Socrates was executed (*FGrHist* 328 F 221), although lines from Euripides' *Palamedes* (*TrGF* 5.2, F 588) had been thought to refer to the death of Socrates (*TrGF* 5.2, p. 596 [52].iic). Cf. the argument about the date of Pindar's death in *POxy* 2438.ii.6–20; Gallo 1968, 65–70. *POxy* 2506 fr. 98 preserves debate about the timing of the deaths of Alcaeus and of his brother.

53. See esp. Revermann 1999–2000, 454–57; Hanink 2008, 113–32. Alexander and other Macedonians frequently quoted Euripides; Bosworth 1996, 142–45.

54. See *IT* 1497–99, *Phoen.* 1764–66, *Or.* 1691–93 (also in two manuscripts of the *Hipp.*). Cf. the way in which ancient commentators explained some of Pindar's first-person statements as evidence of rivalry with Bacchylides and Simonides.

55. The plot of the *Thesmophoriazusae* is represented as biography earlier in the *Vita* (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 III.1 and IV.2); on the sources for the story about the Macedonian women killing Euripides, see Scullion 2003, 397.

56. Gavrilov (1996, 39–43) regards this story about Euripides' bad breath as historical because it comes from Aristotle, but it is in a list of examples about the overthrow of monarchs, not all of which he regards as true; Scullion 2003, 396. On other incidents reported as history by the philosopher that have their origin in comedy, see Lefkowitz 1984, 143–53.

57. Lefkowitz 2007, 106–8.

58. Aristotle was interested in the history of the dialogue (fr. 72 Rose). On his voice in his (now-lost) dialogues, see Cic., ad *Att.* 13.19.4; and in general, Ross 1995, 7. On the positive qualities of the dialogue form, see Leo 1901, 274; Arrighetti 1964, 23; Gallo 1967, 158; Momigliano 197l , 11; and now esp. Schorn 2004, 46–49.

59. See esp. Schorn 2004, 31–36.

60. The tendency of biographers to turn inference into fact was noted even in antiquity; Antiphon's biographer observes that Caecilius took Thucydides' high praise (8.68.1) as evidence that Antiphon was Thucydides' teacher (*XOrat* 832e; schol. 8.68.1).

61. Arrighetti 1964, 101.

62. Leo 1960, 376; Arrighetti 1964, 126–27.

63. Cf. Plut., *Nic.* 29.1–4 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 189a). Similar popular enthusiasm for Euripides is parodied in the plot of the *Frogs* and presumably also in the fourth-century comic poet Axionicus' *Euripides-Lover* (*Phileuripides*, fr. 3 KA, *PCG* IV 21). On Euripides' wide popular appeal to all classes of society see Roselli 2005, 1–49.

64. In Satyrus the proverb is *esti kai kynos dikē*; in the *Vita* simply *kynos dikē*; see. esp. Schorn 2004, 341.

65. Leo 1960, 379; Arrighetti 1964, 21.

66. Jacoby 1933, 10. Many of the character types and plots of Greek novels have analogues in the exciting plots and naturalistic characters of the plays of Euripides; see Trenkner 1958, 35; Lloyd-Jones 1973a, 137.

67. Lefkowitz 1991, 113–16; Dover 1974, 29–30; Gallo 1969, 155.

68. Of the several possibilities, the most likely is that he died of old age, as the epigram-

matist Adaeus says (*TrGF* 5.1, T 107d = 11–16 *GP* = *Anth. Pal.* 7.51). Adaeus seems familiar with Macedonia but may simply be rationalizing, like the writer of Sophocles' *Vita*, who explains why he believes that Sophocles' father could not have been a tradesman. On the treatment of the various traditions about Euripides' death, see also Gow–Page 1968, II 3; Arrighetti 1964, 145–50.

69. In an Arabic biography Plato is portrayed as a Muslim ascetic who loved to be alone in the wilderness and wept so loudly that one could hear him crying two miles away; Rosenthal 1969, 28–29; Riginos 1976, §107; Dillon 1978, 483–84.

70. The character of Euripides is also portrayed sympathetically in the letters that were written in his name by rhetoricians in the first century A.D., to Archelaus, Sophocles, Agathon, and Cephisophon; on the date of the letters, see Gösswein 1975, 12; Rosenmeyer 2006, 97–100. For translations of the letters, see Kovacs 1994, 129–41.

71. Lesky 1972, 197, 199.

72. See esp. Lefkowitz 1987, 149–66.

73. See esp. Lefkowitz 2003b, 103–4.

74. E.g., Lefkowitz 2003b, 117–21, and in general 2003a, 133–40, 149–68.

CHAPTER 10: *Comic Poets*

1. For a translation of the Aristophanes *Vita*, see Appendix 6.

2. Cf. also comparisons with his contemporaries in *Ach.* 629–58, *Ran.* 12–15.

3. Comedy is a character also in Cratinus' *Pytine*, fr. 193 KA, *PCG* IV, 220 = schol. Ar., *Eq.* 400a; Biles 2002, 181–84. Cf. Pherecrates fr. 155 KA, *PCG* VII, 179–82, where the Muse complains of how various poets have treated her. On the rivalry between Aristophanes and Cratinus, see Biles 2002, 169–204.

4. Halliwell 1980, 38 n.23, 39 n.29; Heath 1990, 152; Biles 2002, 169–70.

5. Halliwell 1980, 43–44.

6. Stemplinger 1912, 12–13; Sidwell 1993, 365–89, esp. 376.

7. See also Plato Comicus fr. 82 KA, PCG VII, 467. The practice of smearing an actor's face with wine lees (grapes are the fruit of Dionysus) is first described in Hellenistic theories about the origins of tragedy; white lead (*psimythion*) is also mentioned (*Suda*, Theta 282, s.v. Thespis), but never *miltos*; Dover 1967, 18; Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 79–80.

8. The face of the character Paphlagon (whom the audience knew to be Cleon, 43–68, 74–79) might have been made up in some unconventional way, perhaps as a type of grotesque; in the *Wasps* (1030) and *Peace* (751) Cleon is described as the monster Typhoeus. Dover 1967, 22–23; Pickard-Cambridge 1968, 218.

9. According to Theopompus (*FGrHist* 115 F 94), Cleon was fined for accepting a bribe; see Jacoby 1923–, IIB, 370–71 on F 93–94; Fornara 1977, §131B. But accusations of bribery were standard political fare in Athens; cf. Plut., *Them.* 21 Timocreon, *PMG* 727.8;Hdt. viii.112; and the story that Sophocles made money out of the Samian campaign. It seems more likely that the fine of five talents referred to an incident in Aristophanes' (now-lost) comedy *Babylonians*; see Sommerstein 1980, 158; Olson 2002, 66–67.

10. According to *IG* II^2 1740.21 (T 9 KA, *PCG* III.2, 8), Aristophanes was the son of Philippus, from the deme Kydathenaion.

11. Gelzer 1970, 1397.

12. The fourth-century comic poet Antiphanes is said to have been from Kios in Bithynia, Smyrna, or Rhodes (*Suda* Alpha 2735 = T 1 KA, *PCG* II, 312).

13. See esp. Ornaghi 2002, 127 n.27. There is perhaps an analogy in the reading "Herodotus of Thurii," in the first line of his *Histories*, which was adopted by "many," according to Plutarch, *De Exilio*, 604f–605a, because at the end of his life the historian (a native of Halicarnassus) settled in Thurii in southern Italy; Ar. *Rhet*. 3.9.1409a.27–28 also reads "of Thurii," but Kassel (1976, 164) believes the reading was interpolated.

14. Gelzer 1970, 1398.

15. See esp. Dover 1972, 99–100; but some scholars argue that the trials must have been historical: Momigliano *apud* Humphreys 1978, 188; Nilsson 1961, 122; Atkinson 1992, 56–64; Sommerstein 2004, 145–74; Compton 2006, 144–53. If restrictive legislation such as Euthymenes' decree of 439 B.C. (schol. *Ach*. 67) actually ever existed, it was consistently ineffective. There are no references to legal censorship in sources other than commentaries on old comedy, with the exception of the *Ath. Pol*. 2.18, where the language echoes that of *Ach*. 503 and 631; Sommerstein 2004, 155. Around 430 B.C., Diopeithes is said to have proposed a law against atheists and philosophers with celestial theories (Plut., *Per*. 32), but he was accused of being a crazy oracle-monger by comic poets as late as 414: schol. Ar., *Eq*. 1085, *Vesp*. 380, and *Av*. 988, citing Phrynichus (fr. 9 KA, *PCG* VII, 399), Telecleides (fr. 7 KA, *PCG* VII 672), Ameipsias (fr. 10, *PCG* II, 203); see Dover 1976, 39; Stesimbrotus *FGrHist* 107 F 10a. Syracosius is said to have sponsored a decree in 414 forbidding the use of people's names (schol. *Av*. 1297; Eupolis fr. 220 KA, *PCG* V, 426). But the comic poets used Syracosius' name to complain about it (e.g., Phrynichus fr. 27 KA, *PCG* VII, 407).

16. See esp. Sidwell 1993, 376–77; Biles 2002, 196–97. One suspects literary artifice in stories about acquittals won by the defendant's use of an apt quotation, such as Euripides' "trial" by the women (*TrGF* 5.1, T 1 IV.2) and trial for impiety (*Rhet*. 1416a 28 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 98) and Sophocles' trial for senility (*TrGF* 4, T 1.13). In the third century A.D., the topic "Cleon prosecuting Euripides for impiety for portraying Heracles going mad at the Dionysia" was used as a rhetorical exercise (*POxy* 2400); Fairweather 1974, 255; Arrighetti 1964, 125.

17. Such crowns were routinely awarded and commemorated in inscriptions; see Dover 1993, 73–74. According to the Peripatetic Dicaearchus, Aristophanes was awarded the right of a second performance because the play was admired (hyp. *Ran*. 3 Wilson = fr. 84 Wehrli = fr. 104 Mirhady), though that may have been for reasons other than his defense of the disenfranchised in the *parabasis*.

18. See West 1982, 100–101.

19. Comedy was clearly the source of the fourth-century historian Theopompus' statement that the knights "hated" Cleon and had slung mud at him because he had made attacks on the constitution (schol. *Eq*. 226 = *FGrHist* 115 F 93).

20. On this anecdote, see esp. Riginos 1976, 176–78. Plato's advice about using Aristophanes as a guide is not mentioned in any of the Platonic letters to or about Dionysius. An epigram attributed to Plato praising Aristophanes for his elegance is quoted in a late *Vita* (T 130 KA = *FGE* 626–27).

21. Because of Eupolis' lines threatening him with drowning, Alcibiades, it is said, issued

a decree against open parody (Anon. de Com, xix.61 Dübner), which was then observed by all the comic poets; but on the questionable historicity and/or effectiveness of such legislation, see above, n.15.

22. Dicaearchus (schol. Pl. *Apol*. 19c, p. 421 Greene = fr. 83 Wehrli = fr. 103 Mirhady) and the *Suda* (Phi 308 = T 8 KA) give the third son's name as Philetaerus; Jacoby on *FGrHist* 244 F 75 IIb, 750–51.

23. On what we can know about Aristophanes' life, see Henderson 1998, 1–8.

24. The story of Eupolis' drowning is doubted by the anonymous author of the treatise on comedy (Dübner xix.61; Compton 2006, 144 n.8), but it appealed to literary historian Duris of Samos (ca. 340–260 B.C., *FGrHist* 76 F 73).

25. According to Aelian, Eupolis died in Aegina, but Pausanias also saw a tomb of Eupolis near the Asopus River in the territory of Sicyon (2.7.3).

26. See also Nicaenetus (?) 2711–16 *HE*.

27. Cf. also S. West 1970, 295.

28. On Glycera in the *Perikeiromenē*, see Gomme–Sandbach 1973, 466. According to the interlocutor Myrtilus in Athenaeus (xiii.597a), Hermesianax wrote three books of elegiacs for his *hetaira* Leontion, the third of which catalogues love affairs (fr. 7 Powell); also Lamynthius of Miletus and Antimachus wrote the poems called *Lydē* for a Lydian girl, appropriately named Lyde (Hermesianax fr. 7.41–42 = Antimachus T6 Matthews.

29. Cf. Ovid, *Trist.* ii.369 = Menander T 92 KA, *PCG* VI.2, 27.

30. Athenaeus xiii.594d = Philemon fr.198 KA, *PCG* VII, 317.

31. On a mosaic from a house in third-century A.D. (Princeton 40.435) Antioch, Menander is shown reclining at a dinner table with his *hetaira* Glycera, accompanied by the goddess Comedy (T 37 KA, *PCG* VI.2, 15). See Kondoleon 2000, 40.

32. On the letters of Menander and Glycera, see Rosenmeyer 2001, 301–6. The poets Menander and Philemon were said to have been invited to Alexandria by Ptolemy Soter (367/6–282 B.C.); the story (recorded in one of Alciphron's imaginary letters, iv. 8.4–5 = Menander fr. 12 K–Th) may have been based on the actual experience of the Athenian writer and statesman Demetrius of Phaleron, who went in exile to Alexandria and became librarian under Ptolemy Philadelphus (308–246 B.C.).

33. Lesky 1966b, 644.

34. Telesphorus may have been a cousin rather than a nephew; see esp. Potter 1987, 491–95.

35. Cf. also Isocrates, *XOrat* 837a; Demosthenes' training program, *XOrat* 844e; Vergil "was extremely slow in speaking, almost like an uncultivated person," *Vit. Donat.* 16.

36. Like Menander, Lynceus was said to be an "acquaintance" and even a student of Theoprastus (Ath. iv. 130d = T 38 Dalby). Cameron 1995, 188, imagines that Lynceus wrote an historical biography, but to judge from the surviving fragments of Lynceus' writings (all of which come from Athenaeus), he had more in common with Machon or Satyrus; he also wrote a comedy, the *Centaur*. As Dalby 2000, 377 observes, Lynceus appears to be writing about a special Athenian "sub-culture . . . that of the celebrities, playwrights, professional comics, intelligent and independent women, prostitutes, even a few political figures, foreign royalty." See esp. Nesselrath 1990, 165–66 n.51.

CHAPTER 11: *Hellenistic Poets*

1. For a succinct assessment of the distinctive characteristics of Hellenistic literature, see esp. Lloyd-Jones 1990b, 240–42.

2. E.g., Pfeiffer 1968, I 140–44; Lesky 1966b, 729–30; Giangrande 1967, 90; Herter 1973, 196–98.

3. Page 1981, 17 notes that Apollonius of Rhodes is not alluded elsewhere to as "the grammarian."

4. Hopkinson 1986, 88.

5. See Appendix 7.

6. Couat 1931, 517, 531; Fraser 1972, I 751.

7. Fraser 1972, I 754.

8. Vian 1976, I xviii.

9. E.g., Lloyd-Jones 1990b, 237–38; Gutzwiller 2007, 74–75; Clayman 2009, 188.

10. See chapter on Pindar. Theocritus may be alluding to the passage about the jackdaws and the eagle (Ol. 2.77–78) in *Id.* 7.47–48; see Hunter 1999, 165–66.

11. Lefkowitz 1991, 114.

12. See esp. Williams 1978, 90–97; Compton 2006, 351.

13. Cf. also Pfeiffer 1968, I 137; Clausen 1964, 184.

14. Williams 1978, 87–89; the association of poetry with spring water was represented in art; as, for example, in the painting by Galaton representing Homer as Oceanus (Ael. *VH* 13.22; see chapter on Homer).

15. See Cheshire 2008, 371–73.

16. On the *Cypria*, Griffin 1977, 44–47; Lloyd-Jones 1973a, 121–22. Cf. also Theodorus' epic *Against the Giants* (24 books), Rhianus' *Heracles* (14 books), or long historical epics like Musaeus' *Perseis* (9 books), or Philon the Elder's *About Jerusalem* (14 books). See Ziegler 1966, 15–23.

17. Clausen 1964, 184; Williams 1978, 4–5.

18. Cf. Herter 1975, 45–47.

19. Clayman 1977, 28.

20. Scodel 1981, 301–20. Callimachus may also have had in mind the notion of the poet as cicada, said to have been used by Archilochus (fr. 167 T = 223 W).

21. Vian 1976, xv–xvi; Compton 2006, 350–52.

22. On literary stance adopted by the poet in the Aetia prologue, see Compton 2006, 67 n.2, 350–52. For example, in his *Hymns* Callimachus deliberately keeps the narratives remote and artificial, see Harder 1992, 394.

23. For the text of the scholia to Callim., fr. 1.1–12, see Pfeiffer 1949–53, 3.

24. On the supposed love affairs between Sappho and Alcaeus (fr. 137 Voigt) and Sappho and Anacreon (Chamaelon, fr. 26 Wehrli = fr. 250 Voigt), see Hermesianax (fr. 7.47–56 Powell).

25. On the reasons for the uncertain attribution, see Fraser 1972, I 558; Lloyd-Jones 2003, 277–80.

26. Bulloch 1981, 112.

27. On the translation of the line, see Matthews 1996, 27–31.

28. Matthews 1979, 47.

29. For Creophylus, see chapter on Homer.

30. Wyss 1936, lvii–lviii; Matthews 1996, 51–53.

31. Henrichs 1972, 74–77, esp. 76: " . . . there can be little doubt that the acute observation on the relationship of the two poets by Philodemus is basically correct . . . "; this judgment Giangrande 1974, 119 found to be unacceptable because it breaks with tradition; so also did Matthews 1996, 259–62. Cf. also Mori 2008, 33–36, who does not mention the Philodemus passage in her discussion of the Aetia prologue, and argues that these lines (though not about the *Voyage of the Argo*) are directed against the *Lydē*.

32. Pfeiffer 1968, I 136; but *pros* could mean "for" as well as "against"; Wilamowitz 1924, I 212.

33. Pfeiffer 1968, I 141, 147–48.

34. Williams 1978, 88.

35. Brink 1946, 16–19; cf. Podlecki 1969, 124–25.

36. Pfeiffer 1968, I 136; Wehrli 1967–69 on Praxiphanes fr. 15–17.

37. Riginos 1976, 118.

38. Düring 1941, 138–39; Praxiphanes is said to have complained (fr. 19 Wehrli) that in the *Timaeus* (27c) Plato first stated the obvious and then put an ordinal after a series of cardinal numbers (e.g., 2, 3, 4th), a story that could have been inspired by a parody of philosophical nitpicking, like that practiced by Aristophanes' character Socrates in the *Clouds* (662–67); Düring 1941, 125.

39. On Satyrus, see chapter on Euripides.

40. Düring 1941, 146; Jacoby on *FGrHist* 76 F 83, IIc, 130.

41. Düring 1941, 55–56; Aul. Gell. xiv.iii.3; Riginos 1976, 60.

42. Düring 1941, 7–9. Cf. Antiphanes 771–76 *GP*; Antipater 85–90 *GP*; Philip 3033–40 *GP* (which includes Callimachus among the Telchines!). To Philip's epigram, cf. Callim. fr. 380 Pf; Degani 1973, 83–84.

43. The *Suda* entry for Callimachus can be shown to be deficient in one other respect. After the reference to Callimachus' *Ibis*, the compiler provides a long list of Callimachus' works that does not include his most influential poem, the *Aetia;* Nisetich 2001, xix.

44. Housman 1972, III 1040–42.

45. The scholia are silent about Apollonius' memorable prayer to the god Eros "to arise and strike the children of my enemies with the delusion that he threw into Medea's mind" (*Arg*. 4.448–49), undoubtedly because they realized that the prayer was traditional; Livrea 1942, 144–45.

46. According to a subscription to the Laurentian manuscript, the scholia on the *Voyage of the Argo* were based on commentaries by Lucillus Tarrhaeus, Sophocleius, and Theon (fr. 11 Guhl). For discussion of their contributions, see esp. Wendel 1932, 105–7. On the name Sophocleius, see ibid., 90 n.1.

47. The story of Homer's exile was known in the fourth century, and stories about Euripides' time in Macedonia were known to Satyrus in the second century B.C.

48. In general see esp. Fairweather 1974, 262–63; and relevant chapters above for Pindar as a pupil of Lasus, Sophocles as a pupil of Aeschylus, and Euripides as a pupil of Socrates, Anaxagoras, and other philosophers.

49. Chares, a *gnōrimos* of Apollonius, wrote *About Apollonius' Histories* (schol. Ap. Rhod., *Argon*. 2.1053–57a Wendel). Lynceus was said to have been a *gnōrimos* of Theophrastus (*Suda* Lambda 776).

50. Rengakos 1992, 48. Cf. also how Juvenal's references to Egypt in Satire 15 are explained not as examples of his erudition but by the story that he was sent off to Egypt on military service as an old man because of implied insults to the court in his comments about the actor Paris in Sat. 7.90–92. See also Syme 1979, 1–15; Fairweather 1974, 241–42.

51. Vian 1976, xxi. For a review of the evidence, see also Hunter (1989, 1–9), who does not draw on analogies from other biographies and therefore reaches different conclusions about Apollonius' ethnicity; cf. also Schmidt (2004, 146 and passim, on other poets), who appears not to have examined the quality and source of the biographical evidence.

52. Cameron 1995, 214.

53. Fraser 1972, II 149 n.209. Another example is the scholar and librarian Aristarchus (ca. 216–144 B.C.), who according to the *Suda* (Alpha 3932) was "an Alexandrian by fiat (*thesei*), in origin a Samothracian." See Ornaghi 2002, 121 n.13.

54. Selden 1998, 294, 300. Aristodemus of Thebes is sometimes referred to as Alexandrian in the Pindar scholia; see Jacoby on *FGrHist* 383 F 1, IIIb, 173–74.

55. Cameron 1995, 216. Herodotus of Halicarnassus (rather than of Thurii) may provide an analogy; ; see chapter 10 n.13.

56. Rengakos 1992, 53–54. Apollonius also wrote about the foundation of Caunus, Cnidos, and Lesbos (fr. 4–12 Powell).

57. Herter 1942, 320 n.19.

58. On the meaning and etymology of *sillos*, see esp. Clayman 2009, 76–78.

59. According to schol. Ar. *Av*. 281, the tragic poet Philocles was called "son of Halmiōn" ("Salty") as an epithet, because of his pungency. Cf. the phrase "grammarians, children of Stygian Blame" (*Mōmou Stygiou tekna*; Philip, 3033 *GP*).

60. Clayman 2009, 187–208.

61. On the form and content of *silloi*, see Clayman 2009, 117–20.

62. Rengakos 1992, 47–48. Vian 1976, x, suggests three possible chronologies of Apollonius' birth (295, 300, 265) and proposes for the composition of the *Argonautica* a date (250–40) that would fit any of them.

63. E.g., Cameron 1995, 185–87, but cf. Hutchinson 1988, 88–89, Lefkowitz 2008, 63–66.

64. The scholia to Apollonius 1.1309 note that "the line is Callimachus' " (*Aet*. fr. 1.12.6 Pf). Many other examples have been supplied by modern scholars: Wilamowitz 1924, II 168–83; Fraser 1972, I 626–40; Hutchinson 1988, 89–97. Cf. Fraser (1972, 640), who states that the many correspondences of topic and vocabulary cites are "enough to deprive [Apollonius] of the title of an independent poet." By the same standards, Callimachus could be considered unoriginal because of his frequent allusions to Homer and the *Homeric Hymns* or because he drew on Antimachus' *Lydē* for his version of the story of Zeus' love affair with Leto.

65. Cf. Lefkowitz 1980, 16–18; Rengakos 1992, 65–67; Cameron 1995, 228, 247–56.

66. Cf. how Plato is said first to have brought Sophron's mimes to Athens and then to have modeled his characters on them; it is said that he slept with a copy of Sophron under his pillow (Diog. Laert. 3.18); Riginos 1976, §128.

67. Cameron (1995, 213–14) argues that the absence of references to Apollonius in the

Vitae of his contemporaries implies that Apollonius was active only in Egypt and Rhodes. But, as we have seen, the biographers' silence usually means that they did not find any signs of mutual influence.

68. The name Nicander is not so popular as Apollonius (which helped lead biographers to confuse Apollonius of Rhodes with Apollonius the Eidographer and Apollonius of Alabanda), but something like seventeen Nicanders are listed in Pape–Benseler 1959, 1000.

69. Cameron 1995, 198; cf. *FGrHist* 271 F 1–2, with commentary IIIa, 233–34.

70. Gow–Scholfield 1953, 7. Cameron (1995, 203) argues vigorously that it was the older Nicander, on the grounds that Nicander and Aratus each appear to imitate the other; but cf. Jacques 1979, 33–41.

71. Since Aratus was a contemporary of Alexander of Aetolia, the author of the epigram is almost certainly Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 B.C.).

72. Gösswein 1975, 6–12.

73. Ibid., 28–30.

74. Kidd 1997, 4–5.

75. Clausen 1964, 192–96.

76. See esp. Nelis 2008, 344–62, 382–402; Nelis 2001, with list 453–81; Mori 2008, 227–29.

77. Wilamowitz 1924, II 224–26.

78. For example, in *Voyage of the Argo*, Book I, Jason's crimson cloak (*ereuthos, ereuthēessa,* 1.726–27) foreshadows the "crimson" (*ereuthomenos*) light of the shining star to which Jason is compared, which enchants but disappoints the eyes of brides (1.778); Hypsipyle's cheeks blush crimson (*erythēne*, 1.791); Hylas, "crimson" (*ereuthomenos*) in his beauty and grace, catches the attention of the Nymph, who drowns him (1.1230).

APPENDIX 1: *The Herodotean Life of Homer*

Author's translation of Greek edition in West 2003a.

1. Athenaeus (592a) says that when the aged Sophocles fell in love with the hetaera Theoris he used these same lines to pray to Aphrodite (*TrGF* 4, T 77).

2. The fall of Troy is dated here to 1270 B.C., and Homer's birth to 1182 (West 2003a, 403 n.31).

APPENDIX 2: *The Life of Pindar*

Author's translation of Greek edition in Drachmann 1903.

APPENDIX 3: *The Life of Aeschylus*

Author's translation of *TrGF* 3 T 1.

APPENDIX 4: *Sophocles*

Author's translation of *TrGF* 4 T 1.

APPENDIX 5: *The Life of Euripides*

Author's translation of *TrGF* 5.1, T 1. For the reader's convenience, endnotes mark correspondences with earlier sources. See also the translations of the *Vita* and other testimonia in Kovacs 1994.

1. The *Vita* gives this information uncritically, even though in the fourth century B.C. Philochorus knew it was untrue (*FGrHist* 328 F 218 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 3.1).

2. In Satyrus' dialogue the *Life of Euripides*, an interlocutor speculates that Socrates' influence may be found in a line from a now-lost drama about the gods' being able to see more than human beings (*TrGF* 5.2, F 1007c): "Such a conception of the gods could be Socratic; for in truth the gods can easily see what is invisible to mortals" (F 6 fr. 39 col. ii 8–22).

3. A different reason for Euripides' decision to go to Macedonia is given in *TrGF* 5.1, T 1. I B, 3; see also F 6 fr. 39 col. xx 1–15 (below n.13).

4. Presumably, no one knew who wrote the epigram, so it was attributed to a famous contemporary, either Thucydides the historian or the poet Timotheus; see Page 1981, 307.

5. In Satyrus' dialogue, interlocutor A speculates that in his poetry Euripides alluded to his decision to go to Macedonia (F 6 fr. 39 col. xvii): "(A) Euripides, however, gave (so to speak) his affidavit renouncing Athens. (B) What sort of affidavit? (A) It was set out in this stasimon: 'I have golden wings on my back, and have put on my feet the Sirens' winged sandals; I shall go into the sky, lifted high into the wide air, and join the company of Zeus . . .'" (*TrGF* 5.2, F 911). Interlocutor B is not persuaded by A's fanciful interpretation and says, "What you say seems more ingenious than true" (F 6 fr. 39 col. xviii). Interlocutor A replies, "You can understand that as you wish."

6. Cf. Satyr. F 6 fr. 8, col. ii: ". . . he augmented and perfected . . . so as to leave his successors no means of surpassing him. Such was his quality as an artist. That is why Aristophanes wants to take the measurements of his tongue . . ." (fr. 656 KA, *PCG* 3.2, 341).

7. Cf. Satyr. F 6 fr. 39 col. xx 22–35: ". . . (A) The death he met was very difficult and idiosyncratic, according to the story that the storytellers and oldest men among the Macedonians tell. (B) What do they say? (A) There is in Macedonia . . ." and F 6 fr. 39 col. xxi: "and he interceded for them. Sometime later when Euripides happened to be off by himself in a certain grove outside of the city, Archelaus went out hunting with his dogs. When the hunters were outside the gates they let the dogs go and sent them out ahead, and they followed along after them. The dogs came upon Euripides when he was by himself and killed him, and the huntsmen came along later. They say that this incident is the source of a proverb still in use among the Macedonians, 'There is justice even for a dog.'"

8. The cave was described by Philochorus (*FGrHist* 328 F 219). Cf. Satyr. F 6 fr. 39 col. ix (*TrGF* 5.1, T 105), who has his interlocutor explain that the idea came from Euripides' own writings: "In that place there was a cave which had an opening towards the sea and in this he spent his days in constant thought or writing, with contempt for everything that was not great or serious. Indeed Aristophanes says, as if summoned to explain this matter, 'he is like what he makes his characters say.'"

9. Aulus Gellius' attribution to Alexander of Aetolia (*TrGF* 5.1, T 2.8) may be incorrect; see chapter 9, n.38.

10. Cf. Satyr. F 6 fr. 39 col. xx 1–15: "His mouth is extraordinarily foul-smelling." "Do

not talk like that, boy," he said, "what mouth has there been like his or could be sweeter than his from which such songs and words have issued?" The "boy" quoted here may be Decamnichus, whom Aristotle names as the leader of the plot against Archelaus (*Pol.* 3111 b 23 = *TrGF* 5.1, T 102; but cf. Leo 1960, 378 n.1. The redundant phrase "songs and words" is half of a comic iambic trimeter (Schorn 2004, 332) and may derive from comedy, like the lines cited in section III.1 of the *Vita*, attributed by Aulus Gellius to Alexander of Aetolia (fr. 7 Powell = *TrGF* 5.1, T 2.8).

11. Cf. Satyr. F 6 fr. 39 col. xii 16–35: "(A) He was hated by the sex for these reasons. It seems that in his house there was a youth, a homebred slave named Cephisophon. He found his wife with this person"; fr. 39 col. xiii: ". . . he endured the wrong, as they recall, and ordered the woman to live with the young man. When she agreed to do so, he said 'so he can have my wife. But I can have his, since that is fair, if that's what I prefer.' He ended up fighting against the whole sex in his poetry." (B) Yes, that is quite amusing. What could be more appropriate than that someone should attack women because his wife had been seduced, or attack men because a man had seduced her? As Socrates said, both sexes have the same vices and virtues."

12. Cf. Satyr. F 6 fr. 39 col. x: "The women ganged up against him at the Thesmophoria and assembled in a group at the place where he happened to be resting. They spared him, first because of his poetry . . ." Fr. 39 col. xi preserves part of a long quotation about women from Euripides' *Melanippe,* but without the lines quoted in the *Vita*. Fr. 39 col. xii quotes several lines quoted from Ar., *Thesm.* 374–75, 335–37, where the women vote on a decree against him.

APPENDIX 6: *Aristophanes*

Author's translation of T 1 KA, *PCG* 3.2, 1–4; see also the translation by Rusten et al. (2011, 274–75).

APPENDIX 7: *Apollonius*

Author's translation of Greek text in Wendel 1958, 1–2. See also the translation by Hunter (1989, 1–3).

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